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REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION IN KURDISH CINEMA.

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Representation of Women in the Relationship Between Identity Construction and Cultural Production in Kurdish Cinema

Kürt Sinemasında Kimlik İnşası ve Kültürel Üretim İlişkisinde Kadının Temsili

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the construction of the identities of women's representations and the formation of cultural production in the films of Kurdish directors living in different geographies made in the 2000s. The thesis centers on the approach toward Kurdish national identity and cultural formation. The thesis argues that the concept of national identity that led to the formation and construction of Kurdish cinema was the transformation that led to the establishment of the construction of representations of women. To outline this transformation, the thesis analyzes the concepts of representation, national identity, ethnic identity, and culture formation. The thesis focuses on the debates on the definitions and construction of Kurdish cinema. It shows that the national identity discourses in these debates are also influential in constructing women's identities. The study proposes considering the representations of Kurdish women and the concepts of national identity, identity construction, and cultural production.

Keywords: Kurdish Cinema, Kurdish Women, Identity Construction, National Identity, Cultural Production

ÖZET

Bu tez, 2000'li yıllarda yapılmış farklı coğrafyalarda yaşayan Kürt yönetmenlerin filmlerindeki kadın temsillerinin kimliklerinin inşasını ve kültürel üretim oluşumlarını analiz ediyor. Tez, Kürt ulusal kimlik ve kültürel oluşuma yönelik yaklaşımı merkezine yerleştirmektedir. Tez, Kürt sinemasının oluşumuna ve inşasına yol açan ulusal kimlik kavramının, kadın temsillerininin inşasının kurulmasına yol açan dönüşüm olduğunu savunuyor. Bu dönüşümün ana hatlarını vermek için tez, temsiliyet, ulusal kimlik, etnik kimlik ve kültürel oluşum kavramlarının analizini sunuyor. Tez, Kürt sineması tanımları ve oluşumları tartışmalarına odaklanarak kadın kimliklerinin inşasında ulusal kimlik söylemlerinin etkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışma, Kürt kadın temsillerinin ulusal kimlik, kimlik inşası kültürel üretim kavramlarıyla birlikte düşünmeyi önermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kürt Sineması, Kürt Kadın, Kimlik İnşası, Ulusal Kimlik, Kültürel Üretim

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I examine the representation of Kurdish women in Kurdish cinema. Cinema is one of the practical tools for the presentation of nations and the production of identities. While cinema makes national and cultural identities visible, it also affects narrative structures and representations in the appearance and formation of the existence of alternative subjects and the national discourse. The art of cinema, where political, cultural, and social changes, developments, and transformations are visible, is essential in constructing and forming culture and identity as a production area. Cinema narratives are affected by national, political, and social structures and sometimes affect the formation of these processes. The representations in the cinema take place in the description of social constructions and changes.

On the other hand, Kurdish directors started to make films quite late. Filmmaking practices have tried to construct representations that will make its national identity visible as a delayed cinema due to political, social, and economic reasons. These films only appeared in the late 1990s and tried to make their national identity visible. This concept was adopted as a part of national belongings and became Kurdish cinema's subject. It affects both Kurdish representations and women's representations. In this way, Kurdish women in the cinema emerged as belonging to national identity, that is, as representations that constitute national and cultural production. I examine the identity construction and cultural production of Kurdish women's representations by associating them with the production of Kurdish national cinema. As a cinematic representation, Kurdish women emerged at the intersection of national cinema and national identity production processes. In this project, I use the representation of Kurdish women in the context of national identity and cultural production. In the cinema, where Kurdish cinema has gained a new existence, female characters present representations in which national identity constructions are visible.

The political, economic, social, and cultural pressures of the Kurds in different geographies, the problematic struggles they have experienced as a nation, and the difficult living conditions have affected the cinema narratives that also form the parameters of

Kurdish cinema. This specific situation of Kurdish cinema also affected Kurdish film's definition, existence, development, and fundamental problems, such as production and distribution. Besides these difficulties, Kurdish films offer a space for the nation's untold history, unrepresented subjects, and identities without official records. By Çiçek's words, "Kurdish cinema is in a continuous state of becoming, and it urges identification with its state of "becoming" through its challenging narratives, which embody the archival absence of Kurdish history" (2014, p.83). Kurdish directors constructed unrepresented Kurdish characters in films with their narratives, representation strategies, form, and aesthetics. One of these representations is composed of female subjects. This study, which focuses on the representations of women in Kurdish cinema, also provides an opportunity to examine. It is essential to understand the cinematic images of the experiences of female subjects by focusing on identity construction and cultural formation strategies related to female representations in Kurdish cinema.

This study primarily consists of three main parts. The first part of the study is about the concept of cultural formation and ethnonational identity constructions of Kurdish women's representations. This thesis will examine women's identities and cultural representations in Kurdish Cinema in the 2000s. It will first investigate how the relations of representation, culture, and ethnonational identity are established through Kurdish female film characters to understand the framework of women's representations. In parallel, this section will discuss the relationship between the representation of female characters in a vast repertoire reaching cultural studies, their connection with the cultural formation, and how ethnic/national belongings participate in the representation of the formation of identity. Thus, it presents the contributions of the concepts of culture and identity in forming women's representations and constructing meaning. It will debate how the female characters are represented in the narrative in the films of Kurdish directors, what common points may be present in the directors' films regarding cultural and identity formations, what they emphasize, and their contribution to the construction of meaning. The concepts of representation forms, identity formation forms, and cultural formation will apply to the formation of female characters in the films examined.

The second part of the study is about the concept of Kurdish cinema and its development. At the beginning of the thesis, "What is Kurdish cinema?", "Can we talk

about the existence of common concepts when defining Kurdish cinema?", "What are the formations that make Kurdish cinema Kurdish cinema?" “What are the common concepts, and what do these concepts tell us?” It is crucial to start by discussing what Kurdish cinema is and how it differs from other countries' films. The dominant understanding of cinema did not develop a formation representing Kurdish characters for a long time or represented the Kurds in a way that is far from reality. The central claim of this thesis is that the directors of Kurdish cinema, especially in the 2000s, created a language of cinema different from the dominant cinema perspective. A pre-described, defined concept of identity has not yet been formed for the Kurds. While the dominant understanding of cinema is defined and can shape existing identities with ideological discourses in cinema, the situation is different for Kurdish directors. Cinema-making practices, a new phenomenon, have been delayed due to political, economic, and cultural reasons. For Kurdish filmmakers, first, it is necessary to reconstruct the Kurdish identity and existence with new concepts (Özdil, 2009, p. 229-230). Based on the experiences of women's representations, the experiences of being a Kurdish woman and struggling because of their national/ethnic identities are transferred to the cinema, and the Kurdish identity and cultural formations are re-established with it. The study is vital in questioning how Kurdish directors construct an alternative narrative in the context of the identity struggle in the 2000s, in which different women's experiences are told by establishing their perspectives in their films and how they create themselves as a director. This study focuses on the representation of women in the films selected as samples and made in the 2000s. It is essential to contribute to this study by examining the developments and progress made in this period. This study will contribute to the literature since there are not many studies on the representations of women in Kurdish cinema, and the concept of 'women' representations is not discussed in the literature on Kurdish cinema.

In the third part of the study, I will examine the films selected as samples Marooned in Iraq (2002) by Bahman Ghobadi, The Storm/Bahoz (2008) by Kazım Öz, My Sweet Pepper Land (2013) by Hiner Saleem. In the study, representations of women and Kurdish directors’ points of view will discuss within the framework of Naficy's accented cinema theory and Laura Mulvey and Chandra Mohanty’s feminist film theory. This study examines the construction and formation of women's representations and how they are represented in cinema from the perspective of Kurdish directors living in scattered

geographies. This study selects the female characters, who are active subjects in the identity construction process, from the films shot in the 2000s by Kurdish directors living in different geographies as samples. Based on these films, the aim is to examine and discuss women's identities and representations and contribute to new discussions and literature on Kurdish cinema.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION OF STUDY STRUCTURE

1.1. Research Methodology

1.1.1. Significance of the Study

Cinema has the potential to help Kurdish producers as an essential tool in reproducing the existence of the Kurdish nation with their language, perspective, and art. In recent years, especially since the 2000s, with its qualitative and quantitative increase, Kurdish cinema as a popular medium has made the Kurds visible as a nation. The Kurdish nation, whose scope was significantly limited in visual and narrative art by being censored and de-identified in the cinematic field, emerged with a new form as Kurdish filmmakers reached the uniqueness and power of the cinematic area. Considered an ideological space where nations can be watched and seen, cinematic production allows Kurdish filmmakers to exist and confront themselves. It also has the potential to help the efforts of Kurdish producers to shake the perception of being Kurdish in the cinematic field and to establish a realistic narrative. Independent Kurdish directors living in different geographies make films that try to make visible the experiences of Kurdish women, the difficulties of being able to exist with a Kurdish identity, the problems they experience as women and Kurdish women, and the discrimination they are subjected to. Kurdish cinema has emerged as films that radically change cultural, social, and political understandings, in which the existence of a different reality is in question. However, it is well known that there are various views and definitions of the concept of Kurdish cinema. Studies expand the framework of purposes of Kurdish cinema and develop definitions of cinema are also gaining importance. Examination of women's identities and representations will define Kurdish cinema from a broad perspective and offer an in-depth view of cinema.

The 2000s were important times when the Kurdish identity and declarations of cultural assets were dynamic. The intense effects of Kurdish identity politics on Kurds

have also affected the films' representation strategy, themes, and subjects in the cinematic universe. Kazım Öz's Bahoz/Storm, Hiner Saleem's My Sweet Pepper Land, and Bahman Ghobadi's Marooned in Iraq, can be given as examples of the first films where we can see the effects of the nation struggling to exist as a Kurd and struggle for Kurdish identity in films. These films are important as they are films in which Kurds living in different geographies announce their intense identity struggles from the 90s to the 2000s through the cinematic universe and build their existence. These are films that emerge as the declaration of the existence of a nation, historically and politically, in which the Kurdish identity, the Kurdish national struggle is visible and the representation strategies are shaped by the Kurdish identity. The aim of these films is the narrative strategy that emerges as a narrative that spreads Kurdishness and constructs new discourses about Kurdishness by pointing out the representation gap that has existed until today, filling and spreading the representation gap with the Kurdish axis. However, how Kurdish identity and cultural production practices are constructed is not independent of the political atmosphere and ideology of the period, and the Kurdish political struggle. In this sense, images, figures, myths, and social practipracticalultural discourcontain then the ing Kurdish cinematic narrative and are simultaneously interconnected to construct and disseminate certain ideologies and Kurdish identity. In this context, films that emerged as a new form of representation in which the Kurdish identity struggle is visible were tried to be constructed. These three films are the first products of the cinematic initiative in which Kurdish identity is built and culture is produced.

The 2000s is the period when films that give special importance to the problems of Kurdish society and Kurdish identity emerged in Kurdish cinema. In this period, films about the Kurdish identity struggle and existence started to rise with new and original discourses, different from the mainstream cinema understanding. This unique understanding of cinema and different discourses on Kurdish identity dominated Kurdish cinema representations and narratives of the 2000s. It is not possible to include all Kurdish films made in the 2000s in the research, instead, it is planned to select films that point out the representation gap for the Kurdish identity as a representative group, contain intense discourses about the identity struggle and Kurdishness, and whose representations are heavily influenced by the Kurdish struggle.

Kurdish cinema was produced and developed as the cinema of the people living in four different geographies and diasporas. For this reason, examining the films of Kurdish filmmakers living in distant landscapes and considering and discussing Kurdish cinema provides more detailed information about how women's representations are formed in Kurdish cinema in terms of this study. In this context, the main problem of this thesis is to examine Kurdish women's identity and the cultural, political, and social transformations that occur in Kurdish cinema, which Kurdish filmmakers are trying to create and develop, along with the increasing examples of Kurdish cinema in recent years, especially in the 2000s. In this sense, the films of Kurdish filmmakers such as Bahman Ghobadi, Hiner Saleem, and Kazım Öz, who contributed to the production of Kurdish cinema in the 2000s and who are important names in Kurdish cinema, made it possible to analyze women within the framework of the definitions of identity and culture. These films have been chosen as the samples for this thesis because they problematize Kurdish women's identities and address the impact of social, cultural, and political influences on the formation of identity women are exposed to in their geographies, with a questioning and transformative perspective. These Kurdish directors produced films with exploration and constructive new perspectives, revealing the problems of Kurds and Kurdish women living in different geographies, similar cultural and social structures of Kurds living in other settlements, and displaying the identity and cultural perception of the period when the cultural and social structures of the Kurds and they're wealthy were brought up for discussion. This study proposes different perspectives and analyses of these Kurdish films, in which original narratives, different representation strategies, and actual experiences are told. In this context, the film samples selected for the research depict the representations of women, who are active subjects of identity struggle, resistance, cultural formation, and struggle against patriarchal social mentality. In the thesis study, female characters who have become a part of identity and cultural discourse find their representation discuss. Examining the female characters in the movies is vital in this sense. While analyzing the films will be explored in the context of feminist thoughts theory and Hamid Naficy's (2001) accented cinema theory.

1.1.2. Problem Statement

Cinema creates a space where various strategic representations are made for nations to express themselves. In this sense, multiple nations provide their visibility in this cinematic universe. One of the strategic representations of cinema, where nations become visible, is formed by the existence and construction of women's representations. It is seen that national presence, culture, identity, and resistance are shown by creating female subjects who support these strategies in cinema.

The female characters, who have become a part of the national identity, are constructed and formed in the cinema together with the effects of the social, cultural, and political processes they experience. It is crucial to examine the female characters' representation in the cinema and to understand the construction processes of female identities. The main problem of the study is the determination of female representations in Kurdish cinema in different geographies and functions and, in this sense, how the effects of these processes are utilized in the construction of female subjects.

1.1.3. Aim and Objective

This research aims to examine the projections of women's representations in Kurdish cinema in the formation of identity and the position of being a subject in the context of cultural production in the cinematic field. This study, which focuses on the representations of women in Kurdish cinema, attempts to determine how women's identities are represented by implementing feminist film theories and accented film theory concerning the construction of women's identities and cultural production. Another aim of this study is to examine how the Kurds living in different geographies convey similar existence problems, identity struggles, and socio-political, cultural, and social conditions to the cinema through the representations of women by Kurdish filmmakers. Kurdish film studies, feminist film studies, identity studies, and representation studies guide this research. A multidisciplinary study method for the cinematic universe will apply to a relatively narrow film corpus. Therefore, the visibility, subjectivity, and experiences of Kurdish women's representation implied in methodology and literature suggest that a

study on the consciousness of being a nation and an oppositional point of view can benefit most from a theoretical framework.

The role of Kurdish women's representation in the construction of Kurdish national identity in the 2000s is analyzed. It is to trace how the perception and strategy of Kurdish identity was integrated with the representation strategy in Kurdish cinema, and how Kurdish identity surrounded women's representations in this period. The aim is to reveal to what extent the representations of Kurdish women in films represent similar arguments, themes, and contents with the contextual features of the Kurdish identity struggle. To do this, how the Kurdish national identity is built in the cinematic universe as a result of intense struggles, how it affects the forms of representation, myths, symbols, images, etc. about the cultural facts of Kurdishness. It aims to describe how it is built by reference.

In this study, examining articles, journals, books, and previous studies on research serves for a better understanding of the subject. In this way, visibility as a woman in Kurdish cinema is to be informed about Kurdish cinema's ideological and discursive frameworks in studies and articles on Kurdish cinema to examine the construction and representation of female identity from the articles written in Kurdish films. In this context, my work needs to determine what Kurdish cinema is and its development in this study and papers. As I will discover later, it was important for this study to establish that the representation of Kurdish women was not adequately addressed in these articles and reviews. In this context, incomplete discourses in Kurdish films are as relevant to my work as those involved in discourses on Kurdish cinema. My emphasis is on determining the main lines of female representation in Kurdish cinema; It is about the construction of female identity and representation, subjectivity, difference, existence as a nation, and hierarchies of power in Kurdish cinema. At the same time, this study examines the conditions under which the production motivations of women's representations emerge in Kurdish cinema, formed by Kurds living in different geographies, and 'how' Kurdish women's representations are constructed.

1.1.4. Limitations of the Study

Although the history of Kurdish cinema and the representation of Kurdish women's identities include a wide range of research, it is beyond the limits of a single study to consider and examine all of them. In comparison, the research aims to understand the establishment of Kurdish women's representations in Kurdish cinema and focuses on women's representation rather than the general representation in the films examined. Thus, representations other than women's representation in films are excluded from the scope of the research. To improve the range of this research, it is one of the limitations of this study to exclude the way Kurdish women directors construct their women's identities.

1.2. Research Method

The 2000s is a subject where Kurdish identity and cultural production practice are visible and the identity struggle is at the center of the cinematic universe. This research aims to present a film analysis of the discourses in the 2000s, in which the Kurdish national identity and cultural production phenomenon heavily influenced representation strategies and built women's representations. This research analyzes the content, components, features, and strategies of the Kurdish national identity representation in films. In this respect, it will provide important information in terms of understanding how Kurdish films relate certain meanings and images through representations to reflect the historical realities of the discourse of Kurdish women's identity construction and cultural production phenomena. Thus, the relationship between the existence and struggle for Kurdish identity and cinematic representation will be revealed. This study aims to include the period's socio-political, historical, and cultural contexts in the analysis. This multidimensional analysis can show the dynamic interplay between cinema, nation, politics, culture, and history. Therefore, the qualitative research technique provides a methodologically appropriate field for this study in terms of reflecting the characteristics of historical and political contexts. Film analysis is applied as a qualitative research method. Film analysis refers to the analysis of a film by relating its meaning to the broader framework of social, political, al and ideological activities. Therefore, it is possible to

define the film analysis method as text analysis that reveals political, social, and cultural contexts and focuses on contexts and contents that affect representation practices. Kurdish films not only represent identity but also provide important insights into the historical struggle for Kurdish identity. These films carry traces of the period's social, political, and culturallifed. Moreover, these films show how the socio-political and cultural situations of the period in which they were made were perceived, and the way of expression and representation strategies of the film were specifically reconstructed. Therefore, this analysis discusses how cultural projects and representation relations are integrated into the socio-political contexts of the national identity discourse that affect the representations of women in these films.

Specifically, this study will focus on the representations of Kurdish women in the films of Kurdish directors living in different geographies (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and the Diaspora). The study suggests that the qualitative research method will provide the most benefit in comprehensively examining and analyzing the selected films. In this study, the film analysis method proposed by film theorist Lothar Mikos in his article "Analyzes of Film" will be applied to the analysis of the selected films. Mikos says that “analysis of films should be a systematic investigation of the structures of film texts, their conditions of production and reception, and the societal contexts” (2014, p. 409). Films do not produce meanings independently but draw attention to the necessity of looking at the social and cultural contexts to which the audience is connected and how the film communicates with the audience to produce meanings. In this sense, the text of the film analysis is a whole that includes the audience, communication tools, and social contexts (Mikos, 2014, p. 409-412). This method is suitable for this study, which focuses on how Kurdish women's representations are presented, produced, and constructed in a film narrative. Understanding women's identities and analyzing how the film communicates with the audience as a whole gains importance in this study.

Mitos, who presents a suitable analysis method for film analysis by embodying the structural function of film texts, states that the five categories to be followed for film analysis are ‘Content and representation, Narration and dramaturgy, Characters and actors, Aesthetics, and configuration, Contexts’ (2014, p. 413). Separating the films selected in this study according to these categories provides an analysis framework for

the cognitive concrete steps to be followed regarding the identity construction of women's representations and the relationship of cultural production. In addition, since this method is quite systematic, it is applied as a research method to present general themes about women's representations.

Mikos states that while applying these cognitive categories in movie analysis, it is possible to analyze each of them, and the study can also limit itself to one type. However, he states that each category is interrelated and affects the other (2014, p.413). This study mainly divides film analysis into 'representation, content, context, and character' categories. I will mention different types under these headings but will not form my main emphasis.

First, the concept of representation is the basis of this study. As Hall (2020) states, representation is the fact of giving meaning. In other words, representation sees meaning as being somehow produced through signification systems such as language and images. For Hall, representation is a two-way process between the signifier and the signified. In this sense, the concept of representation emerges in the context of cultural and social influences. In addition, it focuses on women's identity, culture, discourses about the struggle, contents, practices, symbols, and arguments in the films. It presents narratives about how Kurdish women are represented by turning to alternative readings in the films.

Second, the content category emerges in how the film is presented, its story, and its relationship with social reality (Mitos, 2014, p.413). The content category is essential for film analysis; both the narrative of the film and the meanings that the film reveals in social contexts are needed to analyze the conditions and how the film director created the film and the subject of the film.

The third category, context, makes it possible to produce film meaning by making sense of films in social, cultural, and historical contexts. In this sense, the film's intention cannot be understood independently of these contexts (Mitos, 2014, p. 420). In this study, the film analysis method allows the reading of different effects and conditions on the films, enables the conditions affecting the films to be examined appropriately with the available data, and analyzes and make sense of these relations by establishing relations at the emergence of the films. While both movies and texts effectively combine and reveal other kinds of events, they are appropriate for this study as they also affect the filmmaker's

perspective and require the researcher's subjective interpretations. The analysis of Kurdish films not only analyzes the representation of women's identities but also provides information about the socio-political and cultural background of the period. For this reason, when considering Kurdish films, this analysis method focuses on context relations such as the existing social structure, political phenomena, power relations, and inequalities.

Finally, the character category is closely related to the concept of identity. It is crucial for the film subjects' identity formation and the representation framework's function (Mitos, 2014, p. 416-417). The study will analyze the films according to these components of the formation of Kurdish women's representations in constructing their identities and cultural production. It is essential to consider the different social and political contexts in the geographies where the films are produced to look at the representation relationship from a broad perspective. At the beginning of these activities, it is crucial to how texts and texts construct Kurdish women, how Kurdish women's identity is built discursively, and how the character of these films about culture and identity emerges in the construction of Kurdish women's representations. In the context of identity formation and cultural production, I will examine how the Kurds convey the problems they are exposed to in the places they live and how they express their struggles through their women's identities.

1.2.1. Sample Design

To the extent that the rapidly developing political environment of the 1990s and 2000s allowed, it also structured the cinematic view of the Kurdish national identity struggle by influencing Kurdish life, aesthetics, and politics. To increase the visibility of the identity struggle in the national and international arena, Kurdish filmmakers have engaged in cinematic productions to make this struggle known and heard through feature-length commercial films. To interpret the cinematic view of Kurdish filmmakers, having determined the boundaries of commercial Kurdish films, the cinematic forms of modern nation imaginary forms, female subjects in the service of the Kurdish regime, with a new and specific representation away from the language of hegemony, are explored.

The first film to be analyzed is the Gomgashtei Dar Aragh (Marooned in Iraq/ Annemin Ülkesinin Şarkıları 2002) by Iranian Kurdish director Bahman Ghobadi. According to Devrim Kılıç, “The idea and feeling of a Kurdish cinema were reinforced by the entry of Bahman Ghobadi and Hiner Saleem into the cinema industry and their international successes after 1999” (2009, p. 4). In this sense, Bahman Ghobadi is one of the most well-known Kurdish directors in Kurdish cinema. The subject of his films is the life of the Kurdish nation in Iran; Ghobadi is one of the directors who represent the Kurds as 'Kurds' in his cinema and shows the identities, identity problems, and culture of the Kurds (Kılıç, 2009, p.138). In this sense, Bahman Ghobadi, who focuses on the issue of the Kurds and the problems of Kurdish women, makes the Kurdish presence in Iran visible in the cinema. Bahman Ghobadi is chosen as a suitable director for this study because he constructs a cinematic language in which Kurdish women's identity and production practices are visible.

The second film to be analyzed is My Sweet Pepper Land (Tatlı Biber Diyarım 2013) by Hiner Saleem, an Iraqi Kurd. Hiner Saleem, who lives in the diaspora, is another well-known Kurdish director. Representing Iraqi Kurds and Kurdish women's experiences in the cinematic field, the director presents a representation strategy for Kurdish women's resistance against the patriarchal order. It is also a suitable sample for this study to understand women's experiences in different geographies and the representation strategy for cultural production.

Finally, Bahoz (Storm/Fırtına 2008), the movie by Kurdish director Kazım Öz living in Turkey, is the last sample of this research. Kazım Öz is one of the directors who show the difficulties of the socio-political and cultural experiences of Kurds and Kurdish women in his cinema representations, and he is the most well-known Kurdish director in Turkey. This film is suitable for this study to understand women's experiences in different geographies, the formal structure of cinema, and the dialectic in how women's identities are constructed.

1.3. Literature On Kurdish Cinema

The first step in understanding the representation of women and the ideologies that produce female identity in Kurdish cinema is to examine the concept of Kurdish cinema, its basic features, and the commonality of its agendas. In this context, it is to analyze studies focusing on discussions about what Kurdish cinema is, how it developed, and what concepts it contains. Devrim Kılıç analyses that Kurdish cinema has turned into a phenomenon that progresses in parallel with the self-creation process of the people who do not have a state. On the other hand, Kurdish cinema is the language of cinema, in which the Kurdish people dealing with the problem of emancipation and asserting their identity are narrated with specific images and symbols, using metaphors such as 'border, exile, love of country, snow-mountain (Kılıç, 2009). However, the existence of Kurdish cinema, which focuses on the content of Kurdish films through the concepts of 'border, death, homeland,' which is the common phenomenon of the films of Kurdish directors from different settlements, is based on the identity of the nation and its political struggle. The existence of Kurdish cinema cannot be considered independent of Kurdish political, social, and economic life (Sert, 2019). Based on similar studies among researchers on what Kurdish cinema is, what it comprehends, and what the images and symbols used in cinema are, the findings of this study support these Kurdish directors, who developed their own unique cinematic language and aesthetic form, spoke out new discourses on Kurdishness, Kurdish identity, Kurdish women's, and Kurdish cinema. It supports the idea that although these directors have different cinematographic perspectives, the subjects, forms of representation, and processing practices of ideologies are close to each other.

One of the common themes about Kurdish cinema and what Kurdish cinema is, Kılıç notes that "Kurdish cinema is not only a means of showing and introducing itself to the world, but also a tool for Kurds to see and feel themselves" (Kılıç, 2009, p. 27). After the 90s, with the changing political ruptures and the enlightenment of the displaced Kurds with the cinema education they received in the diaspora, "It is necessary to date the birth of Kurdish cinema to the beginning of the 2000s" (Aktaş, 2009, p. 67). The formation of

Kurdish cinema was delayed due to various reasons, such as the pressures of the sovereign states, assimilation, and denial of policies. The cinema of the Kurds, who created their cinema in the 2000s, is in a state of being with new stories, characters, and original narrations. Discussions such as the existence of Kurdish cinema, a recent phenomenon, and what it is, gain importance with the narrative strategy on which Kurdish cinema is. Çiçek asserts that “Kurdish cinema is in a continuous state of becoming, and it urges identification with its state of “becoming” through its challenging narratives, which embody the archival absence of Kurdish history” (2011, p. 15). She argues that there is a strong connection between the history of Kurdish reality and Kurdish cinema. There are no official records of the stories of the history of the Kurds who do not have an official state. In this context, Kurdishness, formation, identity, and history represented by Kurdish films are historical archives. Kurdish directors see Kurdish films as an ethnographic document of the national-local cultures of the Kurds. These studies support the discussion of the Kurdish people, presenting the truth of Kurdish women as anthropological documents, analyzing the power and domination relations over the Kurdish people with a way of seeing which strengthens the idea and determines its boundaries. As a result, it supports the idea that the traditional understanding of Kurdish women's representation is not seen in the films to be analyzed within the scope of this study and that the Kurdish film universe emerges as a document showing the truth of Kurdishness and Kurdish women for Kurdish directors. Kurdish films introduce the unknown and unseen reality from cultural, social, and political perspectives.

Since studies on Kurdish cinema logically develop in national cinema and transnational cinema studies, this study is somewhat different from the earlier chapters. Kurdish cinema is closely related to the Kurdish women's identity of the Kurdish truth. In this context, it is necessary to discuss Kurdish films that reflect the reality of Kurdish women with a documentary film style in the cinematic fiction of Kurdishness. Çiftçi (2014) analyzes the film universe with the method that she calls 'public memory,' which combines both 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' in her analysis of Kurdish films in Turkey. She argues, “Kurdish films addressed here function as one of the major mediums of publicizing Kurdish memories; they render hitherto silenced Kurdish memories publicly visible and publicly accessible” (2014, p. 88). According to Çiftçi, with a reminiscent

approach, Kurdish film reflects the Kurdish reality that has not been told, represented, and denied about the Kurds until today. She draws attention to the fact that the Kurds in the film serve as a fixed and indisputable representation of Kurdishness. However, she claims, "Traditional denial policy strictly banning any public representation of Kurdish identity and the Kurdish conflict had impinged on the cinema and left behind a void of representation in the film history of the country" (2014, p. 89). Çiftçi states that beyond paying attention to the representation gap that Kurds are exposed to, the film space should also include the construction of Kurdishness as a form of representation and the denial of minorities as an integral part of the construction and reorganization of Kurdishness through this memory. Koçer (2014) discusses Kurdish film by analyzing it based on ethnographic concepts and emphasizing the importance of history and memory. In film analysis, she proposes to draw attention to the formation of identity within the film in the dilemma of official ideologies and counter-history (2014). She states that "Kurdish film entangles three distinct binary oppositions embedded in canonical documentary and ethnographic practice: the dichotomies between Self and Other, between fiction and reality, and between history and memory, whether political or personal" (2014, p. 138). While this is a necessary move towards a "historical reading," this understanding can be further developed by analyzing how official ideologies have influenced the formation of Kurdish identity. Making the ideological presence of the representation of truth visible in a Kurdish cinema is also recreating and reorganizing the historical and systematic absence of the Kurds and Kurdish women who are deprived of visibility. This understanding can be further developed by analyzing how the two grounds affect each other.

The development of Kurdish cinema since the end of the 90s, the quantitative increase in Kurdish films, and this turn within Kurdish cinema have encouraged thinking about the power relations underlying Kurdish cinema production. One result of this change was to question what kind of Kurdish identity was produced in the cinema environment, how the Kurds defined themselves, and how this affected the perception of their accurate representations. Çiftçi argues, "It is beyond what the films themselves say, and before they even start watching the film, that they say too much as a declaration of existence" (2009, p. 269). She argues, "The analysis of the Kurdish director's films should begin with analyzing what the mere existence of these films means, before their inner

meanings, discourses and grammars" (2009, pp. 267-269). Çiftçi also criticizes the denial policy towards the Kurds in her analysis, which argues that there is a parallelism between the fact that the Kurdish cinema began to speak and the existence of the Kurds, who had a representation gap until today. The study, centering on the politics of denial, also reads as an area where Kurdish films reproduce the phenomena of denial and reality in their production practice. This analysis supports the idea that Kurdish cinema, which I also discussed in this thesis, cannot be imagined without the Kurdish allegory that Kurdish women are denied, and their existence is invisible regarding the representation strategy. This study will examine how these allegories are processed and shown and with which images they are structured.

Kurdish cinema literature witnessed the emergence of studies focusing on the importance of national identity and the cultural production of Kurdish identity in cinema. Dr. Kamal (2009) discusses Kurdish cinema, through national discourses, in the process of Kurdish identity construction, that the conditions of political oppression and the cultural life of the Kurds affect the identities produced. This study proposes the concept of cultural production to analyze Kurdish cinema. Despite the validity of critical analyzes against the effects of representational forms created in Kurdish cinema, it makes insufficient use of ideological analysis. However, it does not pay attention to broader political-cultural issues. Kılıç (2009) analyzes how the culture and identity of Kurdish society are related to cinematic representations of women by examining the films of Kurdish director Bahman Ghobadi. Kılıç claims that "Ghobadi's films symbolize Kurdish culture and reflect the drama of the people. His films reveal how the Kurds live and relate to each other" (2009, p. 156). Kılıç also discusses the representations of Kurdish women in Kurdish films through political and cultural concepts (2009, p.165). The parallelism between the representation strategies operating in the film and the representation of reality, which is the film's reference, is essential in understanding the diversity of effects that produce and reveal Kurdish femininity in Kurdish cinema. The socio-economic, political, and cultural reality of the Kurdish people and the fact of film production are also interchangeable. So these studies will contribute to my discussion of the construction of Kurdish women in cinema through nation-culture production by changing and redefining

the Kurds, who are limited by cultural and political borders, following cultural production theories and national identity.

Considering the geography where Kurds live as a social and spatial space where relations of power and domination are experienced, cinema directors have processed Kurdish films as ontological documents showing the reality of the Kurdish people and Kurdish women. In this context, the relations of sovereignty between the Kurds and the states they live in have determined the images of resistance to a great extent and have been influential in the production of Kurdish women's identity. Smets and Akkaya (2014) distinguish Kurdish film in the context of resistance culture and Kurdish conflict. They argue that contemporary Kurdish filmmaking represents a founding element in producing political resistance. They conceptualize Kurdish filmmaker Halil Dağ's films as areas of conflict and struggle of resistance. Therefore, they state, "conceptualize his films beyond traditional genre categorizations, instead focusing on the activist and imaginative aspects of his work" (2014, p. 192).

Moreover, they analyze contemporary Kurdish cinema, which they consider to have an ideological structure similar to 'militant cinema,' as the Kurds' struggle for existence. So they state that "the practice of filmmaking should be based on anti-colonial liberation, a struggle that should bring forth liberated men and women" (Smets&Akkaya, 2014, p. 202). Kurdish films emerge with new symbols and metaphors in different forms, where the traditional representational regimes of the colonizing hegemony are broken. New images are formed about Kurdishness and Kurdish resistance. As stated, "goddesses and heroines are evoked to emphasize the important place of women in the Kurdish national movement" (2014, p. 200). This thesis also advocates Kurdish female characters appearing in the film as the film's subject, with the awareness of the national movement in nation building, with combative, realistic depictions far from the dystopian representations produced by the traditional film universe. And further, while Kurdish cinema is shaped as a discursive tool of trauma and victimization by Kurdish directors, I argue that it is also essential to understand the visibility of the Kurdish rebellion and resistance movement in terms of Kurdish cinematic representations.

The Kurds and the Kurdish issue, at the center of the films, is a phenomenon that affects and strengthens the representation strategy, discourse practice, and narrative

structure of the Kurdish cinema. Özdil critically reflects on the relationship between Kurdish cinema and the Kurdish issue. He states, "Kurdish cinema, as a thematic context rather than the motion of cinema itself as an independent art, was surrounded by the Kurdish question and shaped accordingly" (2009, p. 220). Parallel to this study, there is a similar discourse in another study. Şen claims, "Concerning the uniqueness of the historical and social position of the Kurds, Kurdish cinema is a cinema born into the Kurdish issue and surrounded by it" (2019, p. 320). What embodies the Kurdish issue is the identity and language problem of the Kurds. The Kurdish issue is an identity issue, precisely a question of sovereignty. In this context, this article discusses the idea that the relations of dominance and domination between the Kurds and the states they live in have not significantly determined how this thesis produces the identities of women explored and the images of Kurdishness. Kurdish female characters appear as the film's subject with combative, realistic depictions far from the dystopian representations produced by the traditional film universe.

"Themes such as clothing, bride price, honor issues, superstitions, and moral violence are stereotyped themes over the representations of femininity" (Şen, 2019, p. 247). The dominant representation regime constructs Kurdish women's descriptions by referring to these 'Doğu' discourse practices. Şengül argues that Kurdish directors problematize and deconstruct the dominant 'Doğu' discourses. He claims that Kurdish directors "use the Kurdish language as the primary language of the films, connection with the Kurdish political struggle, and dealing mainly with the lives of Kurdish population" (2012, p. 155). Şengül's approach aims to problematize and reconceptualize the definition of Kurdishness in line with the hegemonic political discourse in Turkey. In addition, Koçer and Göztepe analyze the Kurdish characters in terms of their Kurdishness, not as a minority oriental. In this context, "transnational discuss in the context of discriminatory processes, memory, and trauma" (2017, p. 54). In these studies, by recognizing the autonomy of Kurdish films, violence originating from the dominant powers and the impact of violence in society on Kurdish women are comprehended with a colonial reading. In this context, I argue that the effects and contradictions of the relationship between sovereignty and power on the Kurdish people and Kurdish women in the social and political sphere are visible in Kurdish cinema.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

The Kurdish ontological struggle creates a new narrative front against the system of power and social oppression against the Kurds that has been going on for years. These efforts, encouraged by favorable action policies such as the political and socio-economic changes experienced and other initiatives in the fields of culture, have begun to change the visibility of the Kurds in the public and private spheres. The Kurds are politically active in their struggle for culture, art, etc. started to rebuild their positions by spreading to other areas. This Kurdish struggle constitutes an important counter-narrative front, especially in Kurdish cinema, which has grown since the 2000s. In this context, restructuring and discourses have begun to be formed in constructing an officially nonexistent nation. After this change in the political field, a change in the representation of Kurdish women in cinema made a new identification almost mandatory. The positions of these Kurdish women in the social order, their status, the way they speak the language of hegemony, their education, and their existence in the patriarchal social order are generally the result of the hegemonic states in which they live. It existed in a humiliating and subordinated way by its media and cinema. In this context, the new social-political environment in which the Kurds lived allowed these racialized voices to flourish. It is crucial to convey the political oppressions in the Kurdish society, the state hegemony, and the patriarchal order's teachings in the cinema. The deprivation of the Kurdish people, who do not have a state and live under oppression, from the means of communication in which they can express and represent themselves, was produced in line with the cult norms of the states in which they live. This situation has made it necessary to reconstruct the identities of the Kurds, especially women's identity and representation, both in the public and private spheres. Claiming that Kurdish cinema is different from the dominant classical narrative cinema in forming women's representations in Kurdish cinema, as Çiftçi points out, “Analysis of Kurdish films starts with analyzing what the existence of these films means, before their inner meanings, discourses, and grammars. Because the inner meaning of these films, which fill a void, destroy a void or point to a void with their existence, must be complemented by a piece of knowledge outside the diegetic world” (2009, p.269).

In this study, I will discuss the framework of another theory for Kurdish women's identity construction and cultural production processes, and for structuring concepts related to gender in Kurdish films, with Mulvey's approach to cinematic expression. Mulvey emphasizes that psychoanalytic theory uses the unconscious of patriarchal society as a weapon to construct the structure and representations of classical narrative cinema. Mulvey analyzes the psychoanalytic background in producing the female image in films, both as exhibited and watched. In this context, Mulvey explains how to look at women in cinema: "Going beyond highlighting a woman's to-be-looked-at-ness, cinema builds the way she is to be looked into the spectacle itself" (1989, p. 25). Thus, Mulvey says that in a patriarchal culture, women are seen as signifiers of the male other and male fantasies, not as meaning makers but as a bearer of meaning, imposing positions of silence. (1989, p. 15). This theory provides a deep insight into the representation of women in Kurdish cinema. In the examined Kurdish cinema, female images influenced by patriarchal culture have been observed. For this reason, first, it provides a deeper understanding of how women's images are displayed in Kurdish societies, which are affected by the patriarchal cultural structure.

Following Mulvey's theory, she draws attention to the fact that cinematic codes create an illusion, a view, and an object and states that these codes and the structures that shape these codes should be demolished first (1989, p 26). Thus, Mulvey mentions the importance of forming an alternative cinema against the dominant cinema narrative. According to Mulvey, alternative cinema, which is radical, opposes the prevalent cinematic history both politically and aesthetically and shows the contradictions of the society that produces it while reacting against them (1989, p. 15-16). First, in this sense, I argue that the position of Kurdish cinema is against the dominant cinema narratives and that they have created a new and different representation strategy from the dominant cinema narratives. The display of images of women's representation influenced by patriarchal cultures in Kurdish cinema provides an in-depth view to create social awareness and provide social awareness. Secondly, it expresses the existence of alternative, realistic, and diverse images of women that differ from mainstream Kurdish women.

In this context, I will form this study around discussing alternative cinema practices associated with feminism in cinema. The Kurds, deprived of making their cinemas for many years, are represented through the mainstream cinema of the states they live in. On the other hand, Kurdish cinema is shaped by an alternative cinema form based on the deconstruction of the dominant cinematic understanding. Kurdish filmmakers, who present an alternative cinematic experience that processes their perspectives on the representation of the dominant sense in cinema, reveal the position and subjectivity of women in cinema in different contexts. In the cinema of the dominant understanding, the representations of Kurdish women are coded with passivity and sexuality following the patriarchal ideology with the language of power.

On the other hand, Kurdish filmmakers have started a new identity construction for Kurdish women, contrary to their dominant language of expression and these codes of negation towards them. Kurdish women's political, social, and cultural problems are shown differently from the usual representations of mainstream cinema. Unlike the dominant cinema understanding ideologies, Kurdish directors have brought cultural, political, and social issues to the cinematic ground with a critical attitude. In line with these possibilities, the Kurds, who were not told on a reasonable basis in the dominant cinema industry in the representation regime, were created in a cinema where another reality is said, with their past, identities, social events, and traumatic experiences. In this sense, real women's identities that have not been produced, represented, and rejected before in Kurdish cinema are constructed. This new Kurdish cinema practice deconstructs the practice of representing the identity of Kurds and Kurdish women in the dominant cinematic understanding.

Mulvey suggests that gender roles produced by the patriarchal approach reflect power relations and will be broken with an alternative cinema approach against the classical narrative structure reproducing ideologies. In addition, Mulvey analyzes that women's subjectivity and reality are not visible in mainstream cinema. It offers different perspectives, such as breaking the codes of mainstream cinema by opening women's subjectivity to discuss and searching for alternative cinema-making strategies. In addition, the alternative film practice of changing women's images will open the question of how to carry out feminist film criticism with a permissive narrative strategy in light of this

information. In this context, I will constitute this study around the argument of alternative cinema practices that may be related to feminism in cinema. The Kurds, deprived of making their cinemas for many years, have been represented through the mainstream cinema of the states they live in. Kurdish cinema is formed by the alternative cinema form based on deconstructing the dominant cinematic understanding. Kurdish filmmakers, who offer an alternative cinema approach that processes their perspectives on the representation of the dominant sense in cinema, reveal the position and subjectivity of women in cinema in different contexts. The representations of Kurdish women are coded with passivity and sexuality following the patriarchal ideology with the language of power in the cinema of the dominant understanding. On the other hand, Kurdish filmmakers have started a new identity construction for Kurdish women, in contrast to these codes of negation against them, with their dominant language of expression. Kurdish women's political, social, and cultural problems have begun to be portrayed differently from the usual representations of mainstream cinema.

Kurdish films, by definition, are the cinema of a nation in four different geographies and diasporas. In this context, Kurdish cinema becomes the object of critical analytics as its production conditions, language, and aesthetics evolve into an autonomous existence (Sen, 2019, p. 318). I will define Kurdish cinema with the accented cinema theory of Naficy, who works in the cultural and diasporic fields. He argues that accented cinema stems not from the speech of the characters of the cinema of deterritorialized exiles and diasporic peoples but from the cultural production style and the way the characters are formed caused by the displacement of these filmmakers (Naficy, 2001, p. 4). Naficy emphasizes that although the experiences of the filmmakers who make films in the accented cinema style are different, the films produced by the accented filmmakers are similar in form, aesthetics, and ideology (2001, p.10). In this context, the similarity of the approaches of Kurdish cinema directors to the construction of female identities, the similarity of their film narrations, and Naficy's theory of accented cinema provide a theoretical framework to support this study.

Naficy presents a theme about the framework of this cinema by categorizing the similarities of the accented cinema. He says that the components of accented cinema are the visual form of the film, its narrative structure, film characters, identities, subjects

including displacement, themes, film production styles, and the themes created by the filmmakers' personal experiences (Naficy, 2001, p. 4). The most distinctive feature of the films in the accented cinema is the filmmaker's personal experiences and artistic expression styles due to their deterritorialized deployment. Naficy emphasizes that "Accented filmmakers are not just textual structures or fictions within their films; they also are empirical subjects, situated in the interstices of cultures and film practices, who exist outside and before their films" (2001, p. 4).

Naficy says that diasporic and exile films, which he says accent films, are positioned against dominant cinema (read: Hollywood) productions. The importance of the accented film is interpreted by interpreting and criticizing the host society's culture and filmmakers' deterritorialized conditions. Thus, it undermines the dominant cinematic narrative strategies and makes sense of cinematic traditions by creating collective production strategies (2001, p. 4-5). For this reason, accented films form in areas where the experiences of deterritorialized filmmakers caught between societies and cultures intersect. Naficy emphasizes that "Accented films are interstitial because they are created astride and in the interstices of social formations and cinematic practices" (20001, p.4). Accented cinema is an alternative practice against the dominant culture industry and social formations.

Naficy categorizes accented cinema films into three genres: exilic, diasporic, and ethnic. He states that these distinctions are not so strict that most movies have similar characteristics (2001, p.11). In this context, Diasporic identities are built in resonance with their identities before they left their homeland and include an idealized patriotism with ethnic consciousness and a sense of difference. The tendency of people in the diaspora to maintain this ethnic awareness and diverse identity is not endorsed by their original homeland or host community (Naficy, 2001, p.14). Diaspora and exile directors are left behind, the longing for the motherland, and the tendency of ethnic consciousness. In other words, the totality of these features affects the discourses of identity and culture. Displaced threshold subjects' interstitial filmmakers' films are thematically wrapped in their personal stories, identity crises, and cultural struggles between the host country and their homeland (Naficy, 2001). The sovereign states see the continuation of this trend as against their own culture, power areas, and national identities. In this sense, Kurdish

filmmakers are read as a reflection of their strategies to maintain their ethnic consciousness tendencies in forming women's identities and as the image of their political, cultural, and social struggle for women's identities in this conflicted environment.

In this process of identity struggle, ethnic consciousness for identity created different representations from the dominant cinema industry. In this sense, Naficy discusses the concept of identity journey by associating it with the idea of 'border.' The concept of the border can be actual or narrative, as well as the place where race, class, gender, historical and national identities intersect, change and transform. Border consciousness also arises from being on the border, against duality, uncertainty, and ambiguity (Naficy, 2001, p.31-32). In this regard, when Kurdish filmmakers construct their female identities, it is generally through this duality and ambiguity that female characters are portrayed. It is about the imaginary and actual boundaries of who they are and the characters' journeys and transformations of identity. These affect their change as they struggle for their identity and culture against the sovereign state, preserve their authenticity as Kurdish women, and resist patriarchy.

The' journey' emerges as a second concept in the identity journey. As Naficy points out, the prominent theme of the accented film is that the journeys must be understood as imaginary or accurate. It covers the process, motivation, and direction in the identity journey and affects the journey and the character. He states, “Not all journeys involve physical travel " (2001, p.33). There also are metaphoric and philosophical journeys of identity and transformation that involve the films' characters and sometimes the filmmakers themselves” (Naficy, 2001, p. 33). In this regard, identity journeys and deterritorialized film directors' search for identity can be defined as process and deployment. Naficy states that in the films of filmmakers with accents, identity journeys are in the formation process and are not fixed. Also, while creating identities, old identities are sometimes thrown away, and new ones are reshaped (20001, p. 5-6). This discourse can be defined as representations that disrupt and reconstruct women's identities in Kurdish films, the dominant cinema narrative convention, and decide on their ontological existence, Kurdish identities, and cultural phenomena.

This theory seems appropriate for this research. Kurds living in different geographies live in exile in their region. Also, the Kurds who migrated were forced to live

in exile in their country. For this reason, a filmmaker who sees himself as a Kurd automatically categorizes him as belonging to the Kurdish diaspora. However, Naficy's theory rests on this: both situations of difference between exile and Diasporic filmmakers carry with them a sense of trauma and homesickness. While exile is both a collective and an individual experience, the diaspora is collective both in origin and destination. For this reason, Diasporic films often present themselves with a central narrative that represents their people in relation to the longing for a single homeland (Naficy, 2001, pp. 10-16). The main purpose of this research is to consider the idea of representation in Kurdish cinema as a whole and to gain a deeper understanding of the filmic expressions of horizontal networks related to identity, culture, and Kurdishness. Therefore, in addition to focusing on the deterritorialized conditions of Kurdish filmmakers living in their own countries, they must necessarily focus on the experiences of Kurdish directors in the West's diaspora. National cinemas marginalize minorities of different ethnic origins, ignorant, miserable, etc. The Kurdish cinematic narrative and representation style accented cinema theory, in which ethnic origins are emphasized with the identities and collective belonging of different communities, rather than the representations that marginalize them, as more than the geopolitical position of the director, where the diasporic cinema approach progresses in parallel with the conditions that highlight the problems of identity and belonging and their effects on filmmaking practice. is positioned. Therefore, I will examine the representations of women in Kurdish cinema by taking the concept of emphatic cinema to the center of the research. The deterritorialized conditions of Kurdish filmmakers, longing for a common homeland, sense of collective belonging, and forced migration to the West are effective as binding factors in the context of their films.

The process of disrupting and reconstructing the dominant cinema narrative of Kurdish women's identities will define in two different ways. First, it creates an area of resistance to the identity and cultural phenomena of the film's female characters and space for national identity resistance against sovereign states. For this reason, the tendency of ethnic consciousness toward their homeland for directors aims to trace the intersection points with accented cinema in forming and constructing these characters. Kurdish directors who make films in Kurdish in the diaspora, such as Hiner Saleem (Arslan, 2009,

p. xvi), and Kurdish filmmakers such as Kazım Öz and Bahman Ghobadi, who shoot films in their own countries, are directors with accented cinematic characteristics. It can be argued that it would be appropriate to make sense of the films by conceptualizing them with accented cinema theory. Devrim Kılıç, who handles the exile situation in two ways, states that the Kurds, who are exposed to identity and cultural pressures, are exiled people in their own country, and Kurdish directors living in the diaspora, who broke away from their own country, live a second life of exile. According to Kılıç, "Kurdish cinema is the cinema of exile as a cinema born in exile" (2009, p.15). Within the framework of this conceptualization of Kurdish cinema, it is possible to understand the motivations of Kurdish filmmakers in constructing women's identities by expanding their experiences.

The impact of identity construction on women's representations in cultural, ethnic, national, and political contexts and the resistance of women's identities gain importance with third-world feminism. Feminist film theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty describes another theory that provides an exciting basis for this research. Mohanty criticizes some forms and discourses of Western feminism and also argues that these discourses discursively colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of Third World women (2006). Western feminism is in a universalist and ethnocentric praxis that resists hegemonic discourses. Therefore, they approach Third World women with these hegemonic discourses. Western feminism's inadequate Third World self-awareness makes a minimal assessment of Third World women's experiences. Western feminism shapes the experiences of Third World women with male-dominated, patriarchal cultural concepts arising from their sexual differences, revealing the ahistorical, homogenizing, and reductionist concept pointing to an average third-world woman. In this sense, Mohanty suggests that in the representations of Third World women, depending on their strategic positions, women will not be represented only according to their gender positions, regardless of concepts such as racial, ethnic, and class (2006, pp. 398–400).

Mohanty says the political struggle against the class, race, gender, and imperialist hierarchies that can form Third World women as a strategic group at the historical crossroads can create common dependencies. These dependencies begin with the identity journeys, struggles, and construction of Kurdish female characters. In this sense, the battle against the sovereign state is the context of the socio-political and cultural struggle against

class, race, gender, and gender discourses. Mohanty suggests that representation of Third World women will be realistic in their own political, ethnic, and racial context (2006, pp. 399–402). It is essential to benefit from Mohanty's theory of third-world women's feminism to understand the experiences of women's identities and draw an appropriate analysis framework for Kurdish cinema.

Western feminism discourses are insufficient to effectively grasp the representations of Third World women's experiences, consisting of many ethnic, class, political, and racial components. In this sense, considering these factors in these representations of women are taken into account to provide a deep insight into the representations of women and better determine the theoretical framework of the analysis. It is essential to consider these factors to understand the experiences of Kurdish women's identities and to create a more detailed framework for analyzing Kurdish films.

Kurdish cinema has inferences based on Naficy's theory of accented cinema to create an in-depth view of women's experiences in the context of cultural production and the construction of women's identities. Accented cinema theory creates narratives and discourses to understand the cinematic techniques of Kurdish filmmakers, their identity ideologies, and politics. In addition, Kurdish filmmakers use accented cinema techniques to challenge the dominant understanding, develop a new construction strategy about Kurdish women's representation, and develop controversial cultural, ethnic, racial, and political formations, creating discursive spaces for feminist narratives.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE WORK

2.1. Power of Representation

It is essential to discuss the issue of representation in a study that will examine women's identities in recent Kurdish cinema. This thesis argues that Kurdish cinema, which has a critical point of view, offers an alternative perspective to the dominant one in representing women and other disadvantaged groups in society. Examining the Kurdish women represented in Kurdish films involves representation, in which elements of reality such as culture, gender, race, or class serve screenwriters, producers, and directors in constructing texts and creating meaning for audiences. In this sense, the film becomes a field where certain aspects of reality are highlighted and substances are produced. As Hall (2020) states, representation is the fact of giving meaning. In other words, representation sees sense as being somehow made through signification systems such as language and images. For Hall, representation is a two-way process between the signifier and the signified. According to Hall, the images in our minds are reference points that add meaning to the texts and images we encounter. Looking at the concepts Hall discusses and classifies to understand representation theory is essential in this context. According to Hall, there are two systems of representation, the first of which is a set of objects, events, people, etc., known as a conceptual map. It is the existence of a representation system associated with a bunch of concepts and mental phenomena that previously existed in our minds for situations (2020, p. 17). In other words, it is the system in which the necessary images and concepts are included for the known and recognized things in our minds to understand and make sense of the outside world. It is worth noting that for this first system of representation, the concept maps, images, and how they interpret these images are not the same for everyone. In this sense, Hall states that:

(…) However, we can communicate because we share broadly the same conceptual maps and thus make sense of or interpret the world in roughly similar ways. That is indeed what it means when we say we 'belong to the same culture.' Because we interpret the

world in roughly similar ways, we can build up a shared culture of meanings and thus construct a social world that we inhabit together. That is why 'culture' is sometimes defined in terms of 'shared meanings or shared conceptual maps (2020, p. 18).

The second representation system that Hall explains is language. Language is the second system of representation that is involved in the process of constructing and exchanging meanings. Language is a sign system in which shared concept maps, images, and symbols are transferred. In this context, people with the same sign system share the same cultural map by making sense of common concepts and the relationship between these concepts. In this context, understanding the regime of representation in cultural production is an important area. To understand the representative authority and how the representational regime perceives and produces the world, the way language is used is necessary to analyze this field better. Through representation, how language imposes meanings in a culture and how it changes and differs from one culture to another depends on cultural relativism. As Hall states, “Representation is the production of meaning through language” (2020, p. 16-18). In this sense, Hall contributed to the representation theories in cultural studies in the contemporary century by adopting a more constructive approach. In this sense, the constructive approach says the language is not a simple imitation and reflection while producing meanings. The constructive approach method argues that meanings are constructed through language.

The concept maps in our minds produce meaning by categorizing and classifying the material world and abstract ideas. In this sense, the language system consisting of signs emphasizes that we need to have codes in our minds to convey concepts meaningfully. In Hall’s words, “These codes are crucial for meaning and representation”(2020, p. 28-29). In this sense, the constructivist approach takes this system of codes and signs into the center of life, making it an essential part of the culture and appropriating a reconstructing and interpreting process that can take existing meanings and bring new meanings. In this context, meaning for Hall is fluid, variable, and open-ended. Because language, which is not a closed system, constantly changes, the production of meaning is also affected. It is also concerned with specific social contracts based on interpretations and encodings for meaning production. For this reason, the production of meaning is examined in light of the changing social and historical context.

In cinema, directors try to construct meanings by using the system of signs. While these meanings are produced, they provide an image of reality or these images themselves. In this sense, cinema is vital in emerging a new reality and appearance. Hall draws attention to the unstable shifting, twisting, and eventually the emergence of new meanings, despite the intense efforts made by stereotyping strategies to fix the purposes constructed through representation. According to Hall, “words and image scarry connotations over which no one has complete control, and these marginal or submerged meanings come to the surface, allowing different meanings to be constructed, different things to be shown and said” (Hall, 2020, p. 270). In this context, while independent Kurdish filmmakers frequently deal with the identity problems and cultural formations of Kurds and Kurdish women to construct a new reality, this study also analyzes how this reality is handled and constructed. It also follows the constructivist approach of representation by associating this constructivist approach with broader social, socio-political, and cultural reality.

Mohanty criticizes the politics of representation while addressing the issues of nation, identity, and power in her article “Under Western Eyes.” In particular, she criticizes Western feminism's approach to ‘Third World women’ as homogeneous groups, ignoring reductionist, ahistorical, racial, class, and environmental differences. Mohanty made the global oppression of ‘Third World women’ visible in Western feminist texts and the colonial discourse that singularizes these women's differences. Mohanty says that ‘Third World women’ are more diverse, complex, and multiform than monolithic subjects, the dominant codes imposed by “Western” feminism. While discussing the cultural and historical foundations of women's multiple experiences, she deconstructively critiqued the images directed at women regarding cultural hegemony and power asymmetries. According to Mohanty, two separate tasks should be applied simultaneously to reconstruct marginalized and ghettoized Western feminist discourses towards ‘Third World women’ with strategies that formulate existing cultural and geographical differences by making an internal critique of hegemonic "Western" feminism with a deconstructive approach (Mohanty, 2006).

It is a question of Western feminism approaching its culture and norms in a way that covers the whole world and examines the rest of the world to evaluate it. In this context,

Western feminist studies criticize the inadequate self-consciousness of the Third World, this homogeneous and reductionist approach in which patriarchal and male-dominated discourses about the concept of woman are analyzed through sexual difference, as well as the colonial system in which women are handled singularly and produced as singular subjects (Mohanty, 2006). Mohanty deconstructively critiqued Western feminism, which colonized women's differences in female representation. Pointing out the existence of the differing experiences of third-world women, she has been searching for a new method of liberation.

Western-centered mainstream feminism speaks for all women by imposing Western gender relations on the world. Mohanty discusses the portrayal of third-world women with negative discourses such as oppressed, victimized, uneducated, feminine gender, traditional roles, ignorant, poor, domestic, family-oriented, and persecuted. She says these homogenized discourses produce the “average third world” (Mohanty, 1986). This situation has led to a new exploitation and violation that homogenizes the historical heterogeneity of women's lives by ignoring the differing experiences of women from different worlds. Within the scope of this study, female representations in Kurdish cinema have had paradigms that intersect with mainstream feminism but differ as well. When we consider the issue regarding women's representations in Kurdish cinema, we can say that Kurdish cinema in four different geographies emerged in the context of the Kurdish identity struggle, Kurdish national struggle, culture, and political movements. In this context, we can say that the concepts of nation, identity, and culture, which appear as the parameters of Kurdish cinema, not only build subjects that liberate women among Kurdish women's representations. These concepts also appear in Kurdish cinema as the foundations of nation-building and supporters of the struggle against colonialist structures. This study focuses on the heterogeneous structure in constructing female representations of historical differences such as ethnicity, class, and culture in Kurdish cinema. Because it re-imagines the discursive norms of the status and marginalization of the stateless nation of Kurds and Kurdish women by social, cultural, or political structures, it is also about recording these differences and the syncretic interactions that develop discourses and representations about how these differences produce subjects.

Another point that draws attention to the representation policy is that it is a tool for cultural tool. In this context, culture becomes an essential tool in representation studies by reproducing domination and existing power structures, as well as criticizing the aspects that produce existing class, gender, race, and other forms of authority, with positive evaluations of describing the existing domination (Durham & Kellner, 2006, p. 341). These two discourses assert that culture reconstructs existing situations while destroying the political, cultural, and social landscape. This article, focusing on the structural level of analysis, argues that cultural and political contexts reproduce identities, and representations are made effective by gendering national and cultural identities.

Films as means of communication are embedded in the conditions in which society communicates and interacts. Social and political phenomena that create the conditions become visible through representations. The power of representation is also one of the parts of political, cultural, political, and social formations and changes that create and construct reality. Ryan&Kellner say that alternative forms of representation will be built by recoding the ideological representations for counter-ideological purposes. It moves the representation of general rhetorical procedures away from the restricted realm of reality or subjectivity and brings it closer to the actual processes of social and political conflicts. Thus, it makes it possible to construct new worlds and conceptualize alternative representations that enable the construction of different social realities (1988/2010, p.431).

2.2. Formation of Culture

The formation of identity, adopted with an essentialist understanding covering our biological/ethnic existence, and the formation of identity, which is constructed through conscious choice, encourage two different definitions of identity. Accordingly, Kurdish cinema has created an area that produces discourses over these two identity definitions. The narrative structure of Kurdish cinema is centered on the ethnic phenomenon; this essentialist approach is shaped around the concept of victimization, the representations, and discourses of sovereign states regarding their oppressive and marginalizing strategies regarding the Kurds. On the other hand, for Kurdish cinema, the Kurdish identity, the

ideologies of Kurdish cinema, and the nation-building process of the Kurdish cinematic field provide an unstable, constantly evolving, and changing definition. This study focuses on culture as a constituent element in identity construction. In this study, I analyze these two concepts critically and problematize the idea of identity in the nation-building process. In this context, cultural identity is shaped by our biological/ethnic identity and identity distinctions structured through conscious choices. Bringing the Kurdish woman identity to the fore in the analysis of this study will first reveal the strong effects of ethnic origins as a factor affecting the shaping of the concept of culture.

On the other hand, the historical and political contexts shared traditions, etc., shape identity. It requires us to focus on the constructive function of forming identities and choices. Cultural theorist Hall (1989) analyzes the concept of constructed and incomplete cultural identity. Hall raises the issue of cultural identity by examining African cinema representations, which are accredited to and developed within the third cinema movement. Hall problematizes the essentialism and authority claimed by the concept of cultural identity by eliminating the essentialism and fixity limited by the idea of cultural identity and turning to the fluid and developing nature of culture (1989, p. 72). Hall says that this fixed and unchanging narrative of the concept of cultural identity consists of narratives that highlight the assumption of a collective “one people" based on familiar historical narratives and cultural codes. And that it constitutes the essence of cinemas by creating a solid argument, especially in the post-colonial struggle of marginalized peoples (1989, p.69). In addition, while presenting the theoretical framework of the production of Third World cinema, the relationship between the theory and films is vital in inspiring how the phenomenon of culture affects and transforms cinema. In this context, the influence of the colonial conditions in which the Kurds live has effectively produced Kurdish identity in Kurdish cinema. Kurdish cinema should be read as an effort to establish itself in colonial societies and as an effort of a resisting people to show itself through the universe of cinema. In this sense, the Kurds appear not in the marginalized image of the victimization of the sovereign domination but in the cinematic anti-colonial narrative with ordinary historical consciousness and codes within the colonial struggle. Familiar narratives, histories, stories, images, voices, exile, traumatic experiences, etc., such narrative codes reveal the cultural identity history of Kurdish cinema. The Kurds, who struggled to exist

within the dominant disciplines in four different geographies, tried to maintain their existence in the diaspora and live and develop the Kurdish culture in these geographies. The Kurds have been attempting to create and live the Kurdish culture under the dominant identities of the sovereign states.

Within the readings in the literature, it would be beneficial to consider Kurdish cinema as nation-building based on the struggle for existence, on Kurdish subjectivity as a narrative against the Kurdish identity pacified by the dominant colonialist narratives, and as a cinema that leads to confronting the histories of the past, encountering the reality of today and imagining the future. The Kurdish nation, which does not have an official state, does not have official records in its national history. In this context, Çiçek says that Kurdish cinema is an archive memory for the stateless Kurdish nation (2014, p. 70). This institutionalization practice of Kurdish cinema allows the reproduction of the Kurdishness that dominant perspectives suppress and try to assimilate. In other words, it opens space for Kurdish filmmakers to establish their horizontal networks to create a counter-discourse practice against Kurdish identity's denial and assimilation policies. It emerges with metaphors that produce othering, colonizing, oriental/oriental, and popular victimization discourses and discourses against established narratives that make negative images of their own Kurdishness. In this sense, the institutionalization practice of Kurdish cinema provides a space that re-identifies and creates Kurdishness, previously represented in the cinematic regime, from the metaphor of the dominant view. As Hall mentions, “identity as constituted, not outside but within representation; and hence of cinema, not as a second-order mirror held up to reflect what already exists, but as that form of representation which can constitute us new kinds of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover who we are” (1989, p. 80). In this respect, the cultural identity production of Kurdish films, A representation that identifies the Kurdish identity, the struggle for national existence, as a new subject different from the colonial discourse, leads to a search for a practice of discovery to construct a positioning about what and who the Kurdish identity is.

This study examines Kurdish cinema in the context of cultural production and examines how cultural production affects the formation of Kurdish women's identity. For this reason, it is necessary to analyze and define how cultural production works in

constructing Kurdish cinema. Kellner, who examines film texts by looking at the social structures that affect the formation of culture, opposes readers' dominance in producing meaning alone. According to Kellner, media texts can be read by providing privileged access to social realities due to their proximity to the prevailing social conditions, making predictions about what happened. According to Kellner, interpreting texts and their effects on the current system of domination and oppression must be deployed by critical cultural studies to contextualize texts concerning recent social struggles. Thus, critical cultural studies support the progressive forces fighting against domination, attacking existing oppression and domination. (2020, p. 100-108). In this context, while analyzing Kurdish cinema within cultural studies, it is deployed in its social and historical struggle against dominant structures by producing new movements and discourses that struggle against the existing system of domination and create a counter-resistance power. The texts are read contextually to illuminate the realities of the period by associating them with the socio-political events of the period (Kellner, 2020, p. 198). At this point, Willemen, who draws attention to the importance of examining the text contextually, asks the following question: “Is the relation between a film (or a reading of a movie) and its contemporary social-historical context so indisputable and so clearly defined that it deserves to be taken as a baseline?. Willemen reminds us that even if we make sense of meaning through representations in the study of cultural production, representation does not exist by itself and cannot be associated with historical forces without our theoretical toolkits that do not pay attention to the complex processes involved in representation (2009, p. 248-249). It is beneficial to read the movie texts contextually to draw a better picture to illuminate the realities of the period by associating them with the socio-political and historical events of the period.

By producing the different cultural characteristics and identities of an oppressed society, Kurdish films form the cinema space where they struggle for resistance. With its films based on the specificity of oppression and resistance, Kurdish cinema carries out identity politics by focusing on the difference and originality of culture. These identity politics presents a distinct Kurdish cultural specificity and identity. In Kellner’s words, “Such cultural politics are valuable for providing awareness of the distinct forms of oppression suffered by specific groups and for making the production of an independent

cultural style and identity an important part of the struggle against oppression" (2020, p. 168). The cinema universe presents texts about their cultural structures and desires for resistance by producing identities, creating awareness, and producing new discourses about Kurdishness. Oppressed groups often form media representations to express their vision of an alternative society and voice radical perceptions (Kellner, 2020, p. 157-168). This cinematic universe, in which the Kurds and Kurdishness are made visible, ultimately necessitated the same struggle experiences for the representations of women. The representation of Kurdish women was born in the Kurdish struggle and surrounded by it. They have also experienced and are experiencing an interaction in influencing and transforming each other.

2.2.1 Identity and Culture

Identities are based on the tendency to look at ethnicity suggested by the essentialist approach and the constructivist foundation of the constructivist approach based on conscious choices. Accordingly, these two approaches are explored while examining the representations of women in Kurdish films. This essentialist stance, based on the representation of Kurdish national construction, stems from the Kurdish producers' appeal to the representation of nation visibility, who had not had the chance to express themselves in cinema representations before. Conversely, it includes reconstructing women of this invisible nation in the cinematic environment with a constructivist approach. I examine culture as a constituent element through the abovementioned two basic procedures.

The concept of identity is evaluated as one of the main issues of this study, and first, it is handled as a construction process. Identity definitions develop around the issue of essentialism based on ethnic and biological origins and purposes with constructivist tendencies based on conscious choices. In this context, Hall discusses identity as an incomplete and always-in-process form of production. Hall says about two different ways of thinking about the issue of cultural identity. These views are related to cultural identity, similarities, and differences. The first view positions cultural identity as a core and defines all people with everyday historical experiences and ancestry within a collective culture. Our immutable cultural codes and historical experiences reflect our cultural identity, making us 'one people.' Therefore, the emphasis on unity is more important than

differences, which is essential for this idea as the essence of truth. Another view acknowledges the similarities but also draws attention to the differences. The concept of identity in its historical development transformation proposes to consider the change in the context of change and to see the concept of identity as a non-fixed, dynamic, and variable process. Regarding the second approach, identities should be evaluated regarding similarities within their historical process and differences within themselves. Cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming' and `being.' Cultural identities have a history and are constantly transforming like any historical thing. Therefore, it is necessary to look not only to the past but also to the future. (Hall, 2021, pp. 222–225). According to this view, identity is not an essence but a matter of constructing points of similarity and difference.

Cultural identities are also constantly constructed by vectors of similarity and difference and are included in the strategy of representation with new meanings. This study's understanding of identity is based on the discourses developed around these two tendencies. It positions identity as a similarity in reflecting the integrity of ethnic origins, shared historical experiences, and cultural codes. Second, identities are a product of construction and are changeable. In this sense, it is positioned by pointing to the various meanings of identity arising from its political nature, the change of identities added to each other, and the possibility of their reproduction with new meanings. Therefore, with socio-political, cultural, and historical changes, identities are in transition and transformation and are evaluated on the axis of differences. These dual dialogic effects also examine women's representation in Kurdish films.

How to approach culture and society gains importance. Assman states that culture and society are the primary conditions of human existence. In this sense, culture and society influence and produce individual identities. Therefore, identity is meaningful in cultural life and social life. Culture and society affect identities, and identities also affect society. However, for the 'we' identity to be formed, individuals must be conscious of belonging to the society and culture they live in and express it (Assman, 1992/2001, p. 143). Assman emphasizes that the 'we' identity is strengthened based on shared consciousness and belonging by encountering different societies and lifestyles (!992/2001, p. 143). In this context, shared consciousness and belonging develop based on similarities and differences. As our shared sense of belonging affects our common

identities, a similar situation is also valid for our cultural identities. Assman states that our cultural identities are related to the awareness of belonging to a culture and expressing that we belong to that culture (1992/2001, p.143). In this sense, cultural identities represent a social reality and consciousness. Therefore, cultural identities do not include natural processes but a conscious selection and construction process.

Identity is also related to culture as an accentuation of difference. Identity construction is not just a field we can confine to those identical to ourselves. The contribution of other identities to which the concept of difference indicates in the construction of identities also occurs in the construction of meaning. In this context, Identity positions itself against the other. Identity is constructed through its relation to the other, its connection to what it is not, precisely what it lacks. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that any term is constitutive outside of its 'positive' meaning. Regardless of the negative or positive connotations of difference and otherness, this situation should be a reality in making an identity. The difference and exclusion created by the term other are functionally involved in constructing identity. In Hall's words, "identities are constructed through, not outside, difference" (2012, p. 4-5). It is the fact that it is difficult to make sense of identity without the differences and exclusion created by the distinction of the other, without locating these distinctions mutually. As a result, identities that emerge within the qualities in which identity patterns gain meaning through the other; influence our forms of ethnic, cultural, and socio-political identity. In this sense, identity construction becomes possible with the existence of the other. It is emphasized that identity is a phenomenon that makes the person and community defined through the other different from the others and that the construction process is done through the other.

Another approach to cultural identity deals with historical development, transformation, and change. In this context, Keyman proposes to understand the notion of cultural identity, to understand the demands of cultural identities such as religious, cultural, ethnic, and sexual, which are formed based on differences, and to find solutions (Keyman, 2007 p. 218). Keyman emphasizes that it is necessary to consider cultural identity as a "system-building and system-transforming social reality" and to understand its contribution to the politics of recognition (2007, p. 218). Keyman's discussion and terminology show us the fallacy of demonstrating the concept of cultural identity as

secondary importance with a reductionist attitude. Keyman states that "cultural identities, their meanings, contents, and boundaries are defined and have a certain essence. They are not objective entities with holistic qualities. On the contrary, cultural Identity is a “historically and discursively constituted social reality” (2007, p. 222). Social structure creates influences and transforms the intellectual and operational lives of groups and individuals. The basis of thoughts, discourses, behaviors, and actions are specific processes and components in social life. In this sense, the messages, narratives, codes, and contents that are the components of the cinema universe are the images of the projection of this social life. The universe of cinema, besides giving filmmakers the opportunity of original and personal expression, the world of thought of the filmmakers, who are members of society and produced by the community, is not independent of the environment that makes it. It is formed around the discourses of cultural identities constructed as social reality in the cinematic narrative. In this context, Keyman proposes that the phenomenon of cultural identity as a social reality and recognition policy should be made around a differentiated and multidimensional identity debate and within its different contexts in understanding, discussion, and solution-seeking (2007, p. 223).

2.2.2 National Culture and Identity

Gellner calls the concept of culture a shared life, a minimum atmospheric space for the members of the society, where they can produce breathing space, rather than reflecting the social order that is coercive, harsh, and legitimizing (Gellner, 2006 p. 37-38). In this context, it is necessary to consider the concept of culture as a phenomenon that primarily presents sections about the lives of nations and affects the construction and presentation of identities in the strategy of representations. It is also essential to consider the issue of cultural identity in terms of presenting and contributing to the national state of culture. Gellner states, "Nationality may be definable in terms of shared culture" (2006, p. 55). In this context, nationalism that gives birth to nations uses historically inherited cultures but uses these cultures very selectively and often transforms them radically (Gellner, 2006, p. 55). This way, the national state of culture gives information about nations' life practices and social and historical phenomena. Sharing this cultural state has unifying, reinforcing, and transformative effects on nations. In the representation strategy, the cinema universe is an essential tool as an instrument and reflector of the national culture to be visible and audible, and effective in its reconstruction and production. Based on the cultural phenomenon, it affects and shapes the nation and national identities, which are an essential component of these collective identities and influence the forms of collective identity.

Although culture is the whole of concrete formations that express material and spiritual values in society and individual life, it is crucial to specify various definitions of culture. In this context, Hall draws attention to the difficulty of descriptions of the concept of culture and says there are many different definitions. He points out that the idea of culture has been discussed for many years in terms of high culture and modern, that is, popular culture. Hall, in the traditional sense; Culture is what is called high culture, the sum of great ideas, embodied by representation in works of classical literature, painting, music, and philosophy, the best that has been thought and said in society. Popular, that is, modern culture, belonging to the same frame of reference, but presented on a broader scale, is evaluated within the leisure activity that constitutes the daily life of most music, literature, and art fields. In this context, Hall, drawing attention to the changing definitions of cultural debates in recent years, used an anthropological approach to refer to the

community's distinctive features, the nation's 'lifestyle' and 'common values.' Culture, which contributes to the construction of shared values and lifestyles, is primarily a dynamic process of constructing and producing meaning for societies and nations. In this sense, people or groups of the same culture interpret and make sense of the world similarly (Hall, 2020, p. 2). In this sense, culture appears as an essential phenomenon in constructing and producing these processes rather than being a reflector of social processes.

The cultural element does not reflect a fixed meaning for society and nations; on the contrary, the dynamic structure of the social construction process is in question. In this context, Smith stated that in forming ethnic identities with culture, the primordial-instrumentalist approach, which polarizes cultural patterns as fixed and shaping, should be avoided (Smith, 1991, p. 25). According to Smith, cultural units have states of change and continuity. In this context, the cultural elements that make up the identities did not last for generations as a uniform. These changes in cultural aspects necessitate the reconstruction of their historical, subjective, and symbolic meanings (1991, p. 25). In this sense, there are changes in the fluidity of culture and the elements that make up culture. Cultural aspects of our identity constantly change depending on the context; therefore, rebuilding is necessary. Therefore, our identities are not fixed.

The cinema universe is not only the vehicle through which nations, communities, and groups can make their voices heard, build, reproduce, and transmit their cultures, and it also reflects the national culture. However, communities previously represented in the cinema of other nations in the cinema universe offer an alternative reality for ethnic groups by building their own cultural elements, codes, images, histories, and identities, by destroying and changing the representation forms that previously existed in other national cinemas.

2.3. Identity

This study aims to provide a general framework about the formations that affect the construction of Kurdish women's identity; in this study, concepts such as identity, ethnicity, nation, and culture gain importance. The contexts in which these concepts, which affect the construction of women's identity, are used, It is tried to reveal their relations with each other and, therefore, with cinema representations. First, it is necessary to define the concept of talking about women's identities and understand that they are a matter of construction and cultural production.

Identity is the primary element of seeking answers to many questions, such as who we are, where we belong, and how we are positioned. Identity is also related to the need for a meaningful positioning in such uncertainties. Identity is one of the main elements of seeking answers to many vague questions, such as who we are, where we belong, and how we are positioned. Identity is a search and construction process to make sense of uncertainties such as what we are, where we belong, and who we are. In other words, identity emerges as a search to make sense of the uncertainties about where it should be positioned according to the cultural values and norms of the society in which it lives. “ 'Identity' is a name given to the escape sought from that uncertainty.” Identity is related to the need for a meaningful positioning and existence in such uncertainties. “identity has the ontological status of a project and a postulate” (Bauman, 2012, p. 19). The identity these definitions point to is shaped around the purpose of people understanding and positioning themselves. Castells says, "Identity is people's source of meaning and experience” (2006, p. 12). Identity means an individual's existence, understanding, self-consciousness, and position. In addition to these views, there are definitions related to what we are based on similarities and differences within the collective groups to which we belong. Connolly states that identity is more about what we are and how we are recognized than what we choose or want. In this sense, Connolly draws attention to the fact that identity formation must be established concerning a series of differences. After these differences exist, identity turns difference into otherness to secure itself (2002, p. 64). On the basis of differentiation, the relation of identification and homogeneity with

collective groups is established in connection. This identification and homogeneity relationship cannot be treated independently of the identity of other groups.

While explaining the concept of identity, it is possible to say that it is defined through categories made over individual and shared identities. It isn't easy to distinguish between individual and collective identities and to think independently of each other. Assman divides identities into personal and familiar categories according to their paradoxical relationship. First, individual identities are formed by being influenced by a common identity. In other words, creating personal identity and constructing individuals' perceptions about themselves is possible through communication within the group. Naturally, this identity is 'socio-genetic.' Secondly, individuals are needed for the formation of a common identity. Therefore, collective identity is the product of individual consciousness (Assman, 2001, p. 140). Thus, individual and collective identities are inseparable from each other. These two dimensions are considered parts of an indivisible whole in forming identities.

Bauman says, "'Identity' is a hopelessly ambiguous idea and a double-edged sword." In this context, in addition to the difficulty of defining identity, according to Bauman, it is a battle cry for individuals and groups to promote themselves as they are. It is a war cry against more prominent groups, especially individuals and groups exposed to collective oppression and whose differences are suppressed. (2004, p.76). While identity tends to make the other look like itself, on the other hand, it creates a field of struggle based on differences. To better understand the concept of identity, the result of encountering the other can be considered as a phenomenon built on cultural, ethnic, national, and historical similarities and differences.

The concept of identity also points to an identity problem. There is a process in which who needs this concept becomes problematic, and identities emerge with different belongings and rise with the modern period. The phenomenon of identity as a construction process emerged as the focus of this study to read well the debates that appeared during this period and who needs an identity. Hall discusses the identity strategy, that identity is a process of existence marked by the narrative of the self rather than narratives that go back to the roots. Identity is a problem of using the resources of history, language, and culture in a state of being rather than a completed phenomenon. Therefore, it is a process

constructed within the representation. The question of identity also brings about the identity crisis. It is necessary to locate the identity crisis, which progresses in line with modern times, within historical developments and practices that distort the relatively settled character of identity. Because the problem that is supposed to fall into identities and their solutions to this crisis are related to the use of the materials of history and culture in our formation process rather than the question of whom we are by referring to our past origins. This formation process shows connections to how we are represented (Hall, 2012, p. 1-4). As a result, the representation will deconstruct traditional and ideological approaches to identity within historical and cultural practices of processes related to who we are and who we are.

Hall expresses that identity as an existential reality is a never-ending and never-ending process of formation. According to Hall, identity as a process of building is constructed with its ambivalent structure between the situation of identification, which is the same as us, and the other who is different from us. With an emphasis on the other, they position themselves about what they are and aspire to be (Hall, 1989, p. 42-48). Thus, the features belonging to the other are the boundaries and differences that separate us from them, but they are also closely related to the processes we are and who we want to be.

It aims to reveal the elements determining Kurdish women's identity construction. So concepts such as identity construction, ethnicity, nation, and culture gain importance in this study. In what contexts are these concepts used, their relations with each other, and women's identities are examined.

2.3.1. Identity Construction

Identity construction is both a natural process and an ever-changing dynamic process. Identity is an effort that needs to be invented for the purpose determined rather than discovery. It is the struggle for the identity to be constructed by choosing among the alternatives in the first place and preserving this constructed identity (Bauman, 2017, p. 25).

Identities are constructed by being influenced by the society in which the individual lives and being the natural features of the individual through blood ties. The individual's identity develops, changes, and transforms within the socio-cultural structure. It affects

the evolution and transformation of individuals from the current changes and modifications in social formations. Bilgin says that identity is the positioning of the person or group relative to other people or the group (Bilgin, 2007, p. 11). The concept of innate identity traits and the societies to which individuals and communities belong influence these identities. In this study, the idea of identity is discussed regarding the effects of sociocultural, political, and historical processes and changes experienced by the society to which the individual and the community belong.

Talking about identity is necessary to define the concept of identity, which we see as a construction strategy. The most general evaluation of the definition of identity is that of the individual or group as 'Who am I?' or 'Who are we?' The answers given to the question also provide the framework of the theoretical structure of this concept. In this context, identity construction occurs in the individual and collective spheres. First, the question of ‘who am I’ is a state of self-consciousness in which identity is interpreted from the individual to society. This state of self-consciousness affects the formation of identity in line with the needs of individuals by constructing meanings. While individuals define the identities they have acquired in line with their needs, this social process in which they are involved affects the formation of identity.

There is a collective identity construction with their collective belonging, which is related to the history and beliefs of the communities. According to Bilgin, collective identity is the demand for certain groups to reveal the similarity of their ethnic makeup and their difference from other communities. This difference is in a functional structure in the identity of the group. In this sense, identity is a process based on differences, similarities, and a dynamic phenomenon that is shaped according to the other. Community members create and change the identity-building process with other communities in which they live. In this context, culture, history, and language emerge as prominent elements of forming a collective identity by being transferred from the community's memory (Bilgin, 1999, p. 59-62). In this case, the collective identity of a particular society is self-conscious based on similarities and differences with other communities, and the dynamic structure of the identity construction process emerges as a feature. Connoly, who relates the collective state of identity through differences and similarities, underlines that identity should be understood by associating it with especially these differences and

similarities. He states identity can be defined as relational and collectively grounded (Connoly, 2002, p. xiv). In this case, in contrast, 'collective identity' becomes essential. Connoly says that the identification of the collective groups defines personal identity. Still, more importantly, it is evident when compared based on a series of differences about what we are not (2002. p. xiv). Thus, individuals identify with their communities or separate themselves from collective groups based on differences and form their identity constructions. In this sense, it can be said that collective identities contain both similarities and differences.

There are different identity constructions according to the conditions of the period, time, culture, and place. In the construction of identity, the community is constructed and produced with cultural, social, and historical elements in the process. Communities are formed, changed, and transformed over time concerning the strategies they are in and to other communities. In this context, collective identities are built around shared histories and histories such as national, ethnicity, language, culture, memory, symbols, and codes. Balibar says, “All identity is individual, but there is no individual identity that is not historical or, in other words, constructed within a field of social values, norms of behavior and collective symbols” (1991, p. 94).

In addition to the discussion on the fact that identities are constructed and how they develop and change in the process, one of the main issues is what identities are, by whom they are produced, why they are made, and for whom they are produced. Pointing out that 'identification' and 'other' positionings that affect our identity construction determine to mean, Castell says, "history, geography, biology, productive and reproductive institutions, collective memory, personal fantasies, power devices, and religious revelations" are used in identity construction. According to Castells, these materials are reprocessed and constructed by individuals and societies depending on social conditions, structures, and cultural projects (2006, p. 14).

While acquiring identities, they are socially constructed in our environment. In this sense, creating identities in the social structure is one of the issues that many theorists focus on and discuss. In this sense, Castell analyzed the legitimating, resister, and project identities, marked by power relations in the social construction of identity, by dividing them into three different forms and origins in the context of collective identities. In this

context, legitimating identity is the identity that sovereign institutions create to strengthen their dominance. The essence of resistance is an identity form that establishes a bulwark of resistance developed by actors that are marginalized and devalued by the dominant. Project identity is redefining their societal position and constructing a new identity based on cultural material by social actors. In this reconstruction process, the emphasis on collective identities emphasizes forming a new social identity. According to Castells, identities, which are dynamic formations, are not the essence and their historical context. It also shows no progressive or regressive value (2006, p. 14-15). In this study, which examines the representation of female identity in Kurdish cinema, female identity is evaluated within the resister and project identity category because the female identity constructed in cinema offers Kurdish filmmakers a new way of seeing themselves in the cinematic field.

Offering a more realistic path for ethnic identity and its formation process, Smith highlights that ethnic identities are not fixed and unchangeable. In this sense, the main thing is cultural continuity, and identities change depending on the situations encountered. In this sense, identity emerges as a constructible phenomenon (Smith, 1991, p. 25). In this sense, different experiences and characteristics of individuals or groups belonging to the same ethnic community can be evaluated within this framework.

Kurdish cinema is the image of the struggle of a nation oppressed by its geography, language, and life. Panoramic images of the imagination and images of these oppressions, resistances, and efforts are needed in the cinematic field. In this sense, these women must be reconstructed on an imaginary plane.

2.3.2. Ethnic Identity

The concept of ethnic identity can be defined as ethnic groups sharing certain standard features with the same belief and sense of belonging. Marshall establishes the concept of ethnicity as a phenomenon that individuals belong to or are evaluated as within the scope of common cultural behaviors (1994, p. 157). Among the qualities that individuals and communities define themselves, Ethnicity is a cultural phenomenon that distinguishes individuals and groups with a common culture from other communities. Thus, another factor that draws attention here is the principle of difference. According to Barth, the factors that reveal the difference emphasize that a different community should first exist. Secondly, the standards valid for this community should differ from those useful for another community (2001, p. 20). In this sense, an ethnic group can be expressed as individuals who share specific characteristics. Pointing out that ethnic group is a cultural category, Immanuel Wallerstein stated that it is a cultural category in which behaviors are transmitted and continued from generation to generation (1991, p. 79). It is possible to say that ethnic groups formed by cultural sharing and solidarity apply to a common identity to build and maintain this common solidarity. Thus, we can talk about identity construction and the continuity of identity production. With the construction of identity, groups, and individuals are constructed over this distinctive identity in the community they live in, and they can be defined against other communities through this identity.

They combine many elements when defining and grounding our ethnic identities and approaching them from different perspectives. According to Smith, an ethnic community is a collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of the common culture, an association with a unique "homeland," a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population are inherent in ethnic identity (1991, p. 21). These elements position our collective belongings, the state of being 'us,' within the framework of ethnic identity. According to Bilgin, he stated that ethnic identity is the sense of belonging that distinguishes and unites the members of the community from other communities (1995, p. 65). In this sense, the

purpose of belonging to ethnic identities is closely related to the principle of being based on common descent and is a very constructive element. However, besides forming an important concept area for developing ethnic identities, this may not always be a valid phenomenon for the sense of ethnic belonging. According to Smith, for ethnic identities, ancestry appears as a myth, not as factual data. Myths formed through imaginary lineages are essential for their ethnic affiliation. The myths created start the basis of ethnic belonging with common historical sharing and cultural characteristics (Smith, 1991, p. 21-23). The myth of common ancestry can be shown as an essential tool in forming and producing ethnic identities.

Ethnic identity is vital in determining the social roles expected from the individual in any social system. Ethnic identity has a more critical position as a social status than other types of identity. In other words, ethnicity is a necessary component of identity (Barth, 1969/2001, p. 20). In forming ethnic identities, common cultural characteristics are expected to be shared, and people belonging to ethnic groups will behave in this direction. In this context, Barth examines the formation of ethnic groups based on cultural differences between groups rather than common culture. According to Barth, common culture should not be perceived as the determinant of the formation process of the ethnic group but as a product of this formation (1969/2001, p. 14). Different environmental factors affect cultural constructions and affect the cultures of ethnic groups. Thus, the same ethnic group living in other environmental conditions can create different behavioral patterns (Barth, 1969/2001. p.15). In this sense, the cultural differences of individuals and communities living in different geographies belonging to the same ethnic group are related to these factors.

Another issue that Barth discusses is the determination of the influential factors in forming ethnic identity, perseverance, and protecting ethnic boundaries. First, according to Barth, the self-identification of the ethnic group is generally at the level of identity. These identity components often appear as root and history. Secondly, common symbols, signs, lifestyle, dress, language, and moral standards are evaluated within cultural elements (1969/2001, p. 16-17). These cultural elements, components of socially constructed ethnic identities, appear as ethnic borders. The continuity of ethnic identities depends on the protection of these borders. Cultural factors may change over time, but it

is crucial to preserve these differences (Barth, 1969/2001, p.17). Similarly, drawing attention to the protection of ethnic borders, Bauman emphasizes that “What made an ethnic identity “ethnic,” therefore, was to be sought in the social processes of maintaining boundaries that the people themselves recognized as ethnic” (1999, p. 59). At this point, ethnic identity becomes very dynamic. The differences between women's identities living in different geographies emerge on this basis.

Communities of the same ethnicity may show different behavior patterns and actions regarding social processes. Bauman says that ethnic identities are a product of human activities and identification, not the workings of nature. In other words, even if identities are related to a lineage, they must be interpreted with social processes to produce these identities. In this sense, it is the product of the human mind, skills, and plans (1999, p. 64). For this reason, although ethnic identity has an essence, it can emerge with different meanings and attitudes under various social processes.

Ethnic identity is one of the essential components of who a person and society are. Ritzer states that ethnic identities give meaning to individuals about the collectivities they belong to and their existence (2010/2011, p. 458). In other words, people come together with people with similar identities to form their ethnic affiliation. With globalization, this coming together is developing and strengthening with more media tools and representations. Ritzer states that ethnic and national identities that are said to be threatened by globalization are strong identities that are not fragile. For example, ethnic identities are maintained and even developed and become stronger with the development of media tools and the dispersal of diaspora groups worldwide through globalization (2010/2011, p. 459).

Ethnic identity requires a collective consciousness based on belonging. In the literature, this state of belonging must be the product of historical forces to create the ethnic group and identity, as well as the importance of having a common ancestry, the common sense of solidarity, myth, culture, and common memories in the formation of ethnic groups and lineages. And it must be historical with the feature of causing dissolution and changes (Smith, 1991, p.20). These standard features that Smith mentions are an element of commitment to ethnic identity for societies and individuals. He states, “Where this syndrome of elements is present, we are clearly in the presence of a

community of historical culture with a sense of common identity" (Smith, 1991, p.21). In this context, ethnicity is one of the concept's crucial elements of identity and culture. Ethnic identity also emerges as a form of collective acceptance based on ethnic ancestry and group. It can be defined as the identification and struggle of ethnic lineage, which is essentially tied to the common culture, traditions, history, and solidarity, based on identity in the context of collective belonging. Ethnic group or ancestry is the collective identity of collaborative groups with a common sense of belonging and self-consciousness that share specific common characteristics and form a common identity with a sense of solidarity. Thus, identity is constructed and produced based on ethnic belonging.

During the study, Kurdish women's representations can be discussed in the context of ethnic belonging, starting from the relationship between culture and identity. It can be said that women's identities are built based on this awareness of ethnic belonging. For this reason, it would not be wrong to say that ethnic identity has an active role in constructing and producing women's representations.

2.3.3. National Identity

The concept of nation emerges as one of the most frequently used concepts in cinema representations. The identities created by the synthesis of the nation-cinema guide the representation strategy. Hall emphasized, "What is more is that identity is always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation" (1989, p. 49). Firstly, Anderson states that the concept of a nation is an imaginary political community. He says that even though the definition of a nation is fictitious, even the members of the smallest nation will never know most of its members, they will never meet, and they will not know about each other. However, he still emphasizes that each of them has an imaginary image of the community in their minds (2016, p. 5-6). A fictional community is needed to construct and systematically represent the nation. In this sense, cinema creates a strategic space to represent nationhood. The cinematic universe presents identities and fragments of the nation's cultural life through representations. The cinema tool provides an important area for nations that do not know or do not know each other, to build community and national consciousness through representations.

National identity can also be read as the sense of belonging that individuals and groups create with the same ancestry and shared historical and cultural codes within the national culture. Gellner states, “Nationality may be definable in terms of shared culture” (2006, p. 55). Nationalism influences and transforms identity formations by using cultural sharing and cultural property. This shared culture is the cultural identity of the nation. Societies are formed according to their national and cultural associations; they envision the future, their thoughts are shaped according to their community, act together within the framework of common ideologies. Based on cultural phenomenon affects and shapes the nation and national identities, which are an essential component of these collective identities and influence the forms of collective identity. According to Assman, collective and individual identities express their existence with identification images. For this, the collective, individual identities depend on the strong interaction, the richness of their joint assets, and the continuity of the images of the national society in this everyday existence is needed (2001, p.142).

How nationalization is built on identities emerges through the relationship between individual and collective identities. In this sense, our identities are shaped according to our society's history, cultural characteristics, and narratives. Together, our social understanding of belonging creates our collective identities. According to Balibar, “all identity is individual, but there is no individual identity that is not historical or, in other words, constructed within a field of social values, norms of behavior and collective symbols” (1991, p. 94). Individuals internalize many elements, such as the values, norms, culture, and history of the society in which they were born, including the awareness of belonging to the community. In this case, individuals present a theme about their communities and are the carriers of social norms, values, and culture.

The dialect between nation and national identity relationship is essential. Ethno-symbolist Anthony Smith emphasizes that nation and national identity are complex structures of interrelated ethnic territorial, economic, and political elements. This relationship is the specific component of the concepts of nation and national identity, which show the sense of solidarity of individuals in the community brought together by common myths, memories, traditions, and culture. In this sense, the definitions of nation and national identity do not necessarily seek the condition of being a state (Smith, 1991,

p.15-16). When the concept of nation and national identity is considered within the framework of these approaches, it becomes very concrete for the cinema of non-state nations. However, it is necessary to deal with what the concept of national identity includes and what it is. According to Smith, individuals share their identity with the distinctive elements of culture to make sense of their position and discover who they are in the collective structure. To strengthen national identity and common sense of belonging, shared symbols, traditions, cultures, anthems, and flags are also important. (Smith, 1991, p. 16-17). This given state of cultural elements and national identity ties strengthens the reconstruction of national identities. Cinema has strategic importance for the representation of national identities. It influences the diegetic world of Kurdish films, in which the national identity is shown, produced, and constructed in terms of cultural and political history. It also reveals women's identities in these contexts.

The basic norm in the formation of the nation and values are decisive in building and developing national identities. Davis & Anthias point out that female subjects in the nation's construction are biological and cultural transmitters. They say women are "signifiers of ethnic/national differences as focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction, and transformation of ethnic/national categories" (1989, p. 7).

As a result, it is necessary to reveal the representations that determine the construction of Kurdish women's identity. This study aims at the above research subject, the definition of identity, identity formation, identity construction and identity and ethnicity, nation and culture definitions of the concepts, and information on the relationship is presented.

In this context, different representations of Kurdish women's identity focus on the emergence of Kurds living in four different geographies in various historical, political, and social processes. The Kurds' other approaches also affected their identities and created a rebuilding process. However, the existence of different representations of women and the different political and economic conditions in the geographies where Kurds live have revealed the necessity of producing meaning in other contexts, depending on the reproduction and construction of identities. As stated in this study, the emphasis that identities are in the process of formation and construction provides a framework for

understanding the representation of different Kurdish women's identities and, accordingly, producing new meanings.

CHAPTER 3

KURDISH CINEMA

3.1. Concept of Kurdish Cinema

In parallel with the political, cultural, and social pressures and difficulties experienced by the Kurdish nation living in different settlements, the formation and development of their cinemas have been shaped according to these difficulties. The 21st century emerges by shaping the cinematic practices of the Kurds and their legitimized forms of cinema within political, cultural, and political contexts. In a comparative context, Arslan says that “it was only in the 21st century that the Kurds began to make films with their own identity and language; After a century in which the art of cinema turned a century and all the cinemas of the country experienced repetition in the story” (2009, p. xi). Several differences, such as the life practices of the Kurds in different geographies, their division as a nation, their exposure to wars, and their cultural assimilation, delayed the Kurds' acquaintance with cinema or the development of Kurdish cinema. However, before explaining the formation and development of Kurdish cinema, it is necessary to focus on discourses that will facilitate the understanding of the language, aesthetics, and representation strategy of Kurdish cinema to understand what this cinema is and the framework of definitions for it Kurdish cinema.

The fact that Kurdish cinema is a reasonably new phenomenon in parallel with its development and that they had access to cinema tools to express themselves in a very late period has caused questions and uncertainties such as what this cinema is, how it is defined, and how it is it creates its representations. It is crucial for the Kurds to announce the existence of these people who did not exist in the cinema before or were represented in other cinemas. Kılıç says it is a cinema still being born and developing and goes head-to-head with the Kurds' fight for their existence (2009, p.14). Again, in an immediate context, Şen identifies that the priority for Kurdish directors is to create these people whose existence has not existed in the cinematic universe. He said, "For the Kurdish

director, the public should be made on an imaginary level and construct their narrative (2019, p.328). However, some common phenomena affecting Kurdish cinema, such as homelessness, snow, borders, dumbness, and pain, can be mentioned about what happened to Kurdish cinema (Arslan, 2009, p. xix).

The Kurds, who had previously been represented in the cinematic field by other nations and other directors, this time declared their existence and identities in this cinematic field with their expressions, voices, languages, and cultures and found the opportunity to make their voices heard. In this sense, one of the first phenomena that come to mind when it comes to the cinema for Kurds is the existence of self-promotion, the longing for a free country, and the desire for identity to keep alive the culture as a means of making itself visible. In this sense, the first fact that come to mind when cinema is mentioned for Kurds is that the desire to make oneself heard, to have a free country, and to keep its identity and culture alive is a means of making oneself visible. (Kılıç, 2009, p. 16). These films, in which the Kurdish ontology is visible, can also be considered the declaration of existence. This proclamation of existence has affected a nation's cinematic understanding, ethics, policy, and strategy by being processed into the films' subjects, themes, and representations. The Kurdish nation's lack of cinematic tools has created a representation gap. The existence of a cinema that marks and fills this void is primarily a means of self-awareness for this nation. As Kılıç states, Kurdish cinema is "the means for Kurds to see and feel themselves" (2009, p. 27). The proclamation of the Kurdish national entity and the connection of the national entity with cinematic narratives have affected film strategies, representations, aesthetics, and themes.

The existence of ideological and historical debates about the existence of Kurdish cinema makes one think about the definitions that the presence of this cinema has become the imaginary sign of a nation. We can think of the existence of a nation with its declaration. Parallel to this, the presence of representations, characters, and subjects points to being Kurdish as a declaration of the existence of a nation. As Özdil notes, “The Kurd shown in the cinema ceases to be just another Kurd and turns into an intense symbolic character representing Kurdishness. In other words, it represents the whole of which it is always a part” (2009, p. 219). In this sense, for Kurdish cinema to exist as a nation means that the narrative issue itself is shaped around this concept, which necessarily implies that

film aesthetics, form, discourse, and representation are decisive over this concept. For Kurdish cinema, the issue is to create a panorama of the political, cultural, and social oppressions the Kurds experience and to fill the cinematic gap for the Kurds. For this reason, it is obligatory to establish a cinematic organization that imagines and symbolizes Kurdishness.

The concept of Kurdish cinema has made it challenging to define this cinema in parallel with the experiences of the Kurdish nation, which lives in different geographies that created this cinema. The reasons that make it difficult for Kurdish filmmakers to take the official identity of the country they live in are their economic dependence and the fact that they are influenced by the cinema of the country they live in and that they make films under the name of the cinema of these countries. In this sense, Arslan, asking which films are Kurdish movies for the concept of Kurdish cinema and what is the character of Kurdish films, evaluated the language of the cinema, its content, the film's director, and the local public figures used by the Kurdish director. In parallel with these questions, Arslan presented a general framework for the movies and directors that will include in Kurdish cinema (2009, p. xiv). As a result, there are many controversial definitions of Kurdish cinema as to what this cinema is. These controversial discourses about Kurdish cinema are based on the lack of an official identity of Kurdish cinema and the difficulty of the economic dependence of Kurdish producers. Despite this, Kurdish directors, who have different official identities in Kurdish cinema, are films with Kurdish characters, the narrative language of which is Kurdish, and the subject of the Kurds (Özdil, 2009, p.221).

The emergence of Kurdish cinema has gained the character of resistance and struggle as an aspect of violence spreading from the political and social conditions in which it was born and the sovereign power. Smets and Akkaya state, “Kurdish film is born out of conflict and resistance, especially since the 1980s and 90s, when the Kurdish diaspora took a more political and organized shape in the West, particularly in Europe” (2016, p. 192). The struggle and resistance problem of the Kurds has surrounded Kurdish films with these phenomena.

3.2. History of Kurdish Cinema

Several differences, such as the fact that Kurds live in different settlements and are therefore divided as a nation, have been subjected to wars and cultural assimilation, have delayed the Kurds' acquaintance with cinema and the development of Kurdish cinema. But of course, it is worth emphasizing that the meeting of the Kurdish entity with the camera did not occur with the making of cinema by historical Kurdish directors. In the cinematic universe where Kurds are represented as Kurds, it is vital to understand the historical existence of the first films in which their silhouettes are made visible. 'Zare,' a silent film shot in 1926 by Hamo Beknazarian (1892-1965), considered the founder of Armenian cinema, is essential in representing Kurds and Kurdish women in the cinema. The film, shot in Armenia, tells the dramatic love story of two young people living in a Kurdish village. The film, in which a dramatic love story is told, is an example of a film in which the Kurds' traditions, cultures, and patriarchal orders are also represented (Alakom, 2009, 35-37). This film is considered a Kurdish film because it tells about the Kurds, shows Kurdish characters, and has Kurdish characters at the story's center. Arslan said, “Zare is considered the first Kurdish film” (2009, p. xiv).

Another film about Kurds and Kurdish women is Yezidi Kurds, shot by director G. Balasyan in 1932 (Alakom, 2019, p.37-38). Similar to the movie 'Zare,' this movie, which focuses on the stories of female characters, shows how Kurdish women are represented and how Kurds are thought of. According to Alakom, the situation of the female characters in these films gains importance in revealing the forces in front of the social change and change that the Kurdish society has undergone (2009, p.38). These films, which are essential in understanding the cinematic response to the difficulties that Kurds and Kurdish women face in their geography, were also produced by non-Kurdish filmmakers of these films that represent the lives of Kurds and the difficulties they experience.

However, some movies deal with the Kurds and the Kurdish issue and are shot by others. Some of the films in the genealogy of Kurdish cinema are Merian C. Cooper,

Ernest Schoedsack, and Marguerite Harrison's Grass: A Nation's Battle for Life (1925). It is an ethnographic documentary. Despite the presence of Kurdish representations in this film, it is a documentary film that shows Kurds as Persians who do not refer to them as Kurds (Şen, 2019, p.21-22). In this sense, forgetting the existence of the Kurds in this ethnographical documentary has historical importance in providing a general perspective on the situation of the Kurds in the nation-state.

One of the films about the Kurds is Italian director Guido Brigno's Ivan, Son of the White Evil. The Kurds are portrayed as those who attacked the Armenians in the 1800s. And another was shot by German director Frans Josef Gottlieb in 1967. In this film, the Kurds are represented as attacking a group of German travelers and taking their belongings (Kılıç, 2009, p.6). Despite these films' existence, the asymmetrical power relations between the representative and the represented are visible. The fact that the Kurds lack the technical and theoretical tools of cinema and that these people are represented in other cinemas indicates the historical importance of these films. Presence

3.3. The Formation and Development of Kurdish Cinema

To understand the definitions of Kurdish cinema, it is necessary to understand the processes in the formation and development of Kurdish cinema, and looking at the background of the emergence of this cinema will provide a general perspective for the understanding of this cinema.

Apart from the film Zare, shot by Hamo Beknazarian, which is considered the first Kurdish film, Kurds were filmed from the perspectives of other directors until the 1990s, and the lives, discourses, traditions, feelings, and cultures of the Kurds came into being with the representations of other filmmakers. However, towards the end of the 1990s, the presence, discourse, and representation of the Kurds in the cinema became visible, and there was a qualitative and quantitative increase in the identity, culture, social life, and political struggles of a nation with their perspectives, their cinematic representations, original subjects, and themes. This qualitative and quantitative increase in Kurdish cinema in the 1990s facilitates cinema production and distribution conditions in parallel with the changing and developing technology in the world. Another is that the social, cultural, and

political changes in the geography where the Kurds live have allowed the formation and development of cinematic production due to the relative removal of the pressures on Kurdish filmmakers (Şen, 2019, p. 318-319).

Kurdish directors' national and international successes are an essential factor in the existence of Kurdish cinema in the 1990s and the qualitative and quantitative increase in these discourses and discussions. According to Şengül, “The debates on the existence of a ‘Kurdish cinema’ started in the late 1990s, especially after the international release of Bahman Ghobadi’s award-winning Zamani Barayé Masti Asbha / A Time for Drunken Horses (2000)” (2012, p.153). The presence of Kurdish cinema in the international arena has brought Kurdish cinema discussions. Along with these discussions, the ideological discursive parameters of Kurdish cinema have provided a new space for Kurdish filmmakers who want to express themselves from their perspective.

There are various reasons behind cinema formation and development conditions for the Kurdish nation living in different geographies. Therefore, the specific situations in the countries where the Kurds live provide a general perspective to explain the reasons for the formation and development of this cinema. It is crucial to mention Turkey, one of the countries where Kurds live. In this regard, it is essential to note ‘The Mesopotamia Cultural Center’s Cinema Collective.’ This place, which provides education and socialization opportunities for Kurds, has also become the center of cinema production. The cinema workshops established in the Mesopotamia Cultural Center are essential for Kurdish filmmakers to express themselves, as well as the birth of Kurdish documentary cinema and where Kurdish youth began to shoot films (Candan, 2016, p.5-6). It is an important center where filmmakers who organize the parameters of Kurdish cinema with their narratives receive training and contribute to the development of Kurdish cinema. According to Candan, “Some of the young Kurdish filmmakers who studied filmmaking there later became well-known and established filmmakers, most notably Kazim Öz, Özkan Küçük, and Hüseyin Karabey” (2016, p.6).

Another critical factor in the formation and development of Kurdish cinema is the Kurdish diaspora. Şen states, "It is the beginning of a Kurdish diaspora in Europe since the 80s.” (2019, p. 319). Kurds, who left their countries due to political, cultural, and social pressures, went to Europe and other countries and contributed to the formation and

development of Kurdish cinematic production. I will describe diaspora cinema and its product in Kurdish cinema in more detail in the 'Kurdish cinema in diaspora' category.

Kurds living in different geographies undergo different political, cultural, and social processes. For this reason, to better understand the concept of Kurdish cinema, it is necessary to explain the effect of the socio-political, cultural, and economic conditions in the environment in which this art production was born and developed. The social and political crises and the deep complexities experienced by the Kurds on different campuses also complicate and deepen the explanation of this cinema. To understand the various formations and developments of this cinema in different geographies, the categories related to the countries where Kurdish cinema emerged provide an overview.

3.3.1. Kurdish Cinema in Turkey

The existence of Kurdish cinema in Turkey, which is one of the countries where Kurdish cinema emerged, reached the 1990s due to legal obstacles. The denial of Kurdish identity and culture in Turkey has prevented the production of films with Kurdish language and content. This denial of the Kurds is portrayed as people living in the countryside, not being represented as Kurds in films about Kurds (Kılıç, 2009, p. 11). In this sense, while the existence of the Kurdish nation in Turkey continues through denial and prohibition, this situation delayed the formation of Kurdish cinema. It affected the parameters of Kurdish cinema that emerged in the 1990s. According to Sengül, the parameters that distinguish Kurdish cinema from Turkish cinema are “such as the use of Kurdish language as the primary language of the films, connection with the Kurdish political struggle, and dealing mainly with the lives of Kurdish population” (2012, p. 155).

Some important developments influenced the emergence of Kurdish cinema in Turkey in the 1990s. One of them is the increase in the influence of the Kurdish movement in Turkey since the 90s, the easing of the pressures on the Kurdish identity, and the emergence of cultural and artistic productions of the Kurdish movement in parallel (Şen, 2019, p. 319). One of the institutions where Kurdish artistic productions emerged and contributed to the development of Kurdish cinema is the Mesopotamia Cultural Center. This place, which provides education and socialization opportunities for Kurds, has also become the center of cinema production. The cinema workshops established in the

Mesopotamia Cultural Center are essential for Kurdish filmmakers to express themselves, as well as the birth of Kurdish documentary cinema and where Kurdish youth began to shoot films (Candan, 2016, p.5-6).

Regarding Kurdish cinema in Turkey, one of the leading names is undoubtedly Yılmaz Güney. Güney, an important figure in the shaping of Kurdish cinema, has shaped the expression of Kurdish cinema both in content and form (Sert, 2019, p. 74). Guney, one of the Kurdish directors who reveals the Kurdish reality in the cinematic universe, Güney's films have described the lives, traditions, culture, oppressions, and struggle of the Kurds with specific images, such as borders and smuggling (Aktaş, 2009, p. 57). Especially in the films Yol/The Road (1982), Sürü/The Herd (1978), and Duvar/The Wall (1983), he presented a panoramic view of the Kurdish aspect. Although the subjects of Güney's films speak Turkish, his films are among the first symbols of Kurdish cinema. Especially in the films The Herd (1978) and Yol (1982), the problems of Kurdish characters are at the center of the subject. n, the difficulties they experienced (Kılıç, 2009, p.6). The Palm d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, won by Güney's film Yol in the international arena, revealed the Kurds' global presence and contributed to the discussion of Kurdish cinema and the emergence of Kurdish filmmakers who wanted to create their cinema—the form and aesthetics of Kurdish cinema, the narrative structure of the films. Although Güney's films are fictional, he shapes the film's narrative structure by using the aesthetics of documentary cinema. In this respect, it affects Kurdish filmmakers. This realistic expression, the use of real places, and the narrative that comes into contact with reality constitute the essence of Kurdish cinema (Sert, 2019, p. 75).

Many filmmakers contributed to the formation of Kurdish cinema in Turkey. Some of those Min Dıt/I Saw (2009), directed by Miraz Bezar, focuses on the story of two siblings and tells the oppression and losses of the Kurds. İki Dil Bir Bavul/On the Way to School (Özgür Doğan and Orhan Eskiköy 2008) focuses on the teaching experience of a Turkish teacher in a Kurdish school. The film tells the absurd encounter between a teacher who does not speak Kurdish and Kurdish children who do not speak Turkish. Press (Sedat Yılmaz 2010), The film about the difficulty of doing journalism in Turkey and deals with the pro-Kurdish daily, Özgür Gündem (Independent Agenda) that started publishing in the 1990s (Sengül, 2012, p. 162-163). The narrative, discourse, representation, and

aesthetic form of Kurdish cinema, which has emerged since the 1990s, has been surrounded by the political, social, and economic conditions in which this cinema emerged. Kurdish directors, who had previously watched their silhouettes in the camera and the representation of others, took their cameras this time and narrated the existing representation gap with their cinematic productions, discourses, and authentic experiences.

There is also the existence of many Kurdish directors who developed Kurdish cinema in Turkey. Erol Mintaş directed Klama Dayika Min (Song of My Mother/Annemin Şarkısı,2014), an award-winning fiction feature. Zeynel Doğan directed Dengê Bavê Min (My Father's Voice/Babamın Sesi 2012); he is one of the directors trained in the Mesopotamia Cultural Center. Müjde Arslan directed a documentary film, Ez Firiyam Tu Mayî Li Cih (I Flew You Stayed/Ben Uçtum Sen Kaldın 2012), focusing on the absence of her father. So it is the story of confronting and discovering new realities on her journey to find her father. One of the Kurdish directors Ferit Karahan, who directed Okul Tıraşı (Brother's Keeper 2021) awarded at the Golden Orange Film Festival and the International Fajr Festival. Another filmmaker producing Kurdish cinema in Turkey, Ali Kemal Çınar, has drawn attention in recent years with his experimental filmmaking technique that humorously criticizes social conditions.

3.3.2. Kurdish Cinema in Diaspora

In the development of Kurdish cinema, the cinematic productions of the Kurdish people living in the Diaspora are also crucial in developing this cinema. The Kurdish diaspora emerged when they left their country for political, social, and cultural reasons. The education the Kurdish people in the diaspora received here, and their influence from the cinematic understanding of different countries developed their cinema production practices. Diaspora Kurds, who want to reinforce this situation with other methods and a series of political works to make their existence visible and draw attention to the problems they experience, have also made themselves visible by using the cultural field (Gündoğdu, 2009, p. 69-72). Cinema, which emerged as one of these cultural areas, has been where the Kurds' problems, identities, struggles, and experiences are told.

Nizamet Arıç, who lived in Germany and contributed to Kurdish cinema, focuses on the existence problem of Kurds and raises awareness in the field of cinema in shaping and hearing the lives and voices of Kurds. His film Klamek Ji Bo Beko/A Song for Beko (1992) is the first movie made in Kurdish. The film expresses the pain and trauma left on the Kurds during the Iraq-Iran war (Şen, 2019, p. 322).

The contributions of Kurdish directors who went to America and formed a Kurdish diaspora there are also important. David and Leyla (Jalal Jonroy 2005) is the story of love between a Kurdish girl and a Jewish man. The Kurdish director lives in New York and makes Kurdish films. Jiyan (Jano Rosebiani 2002) is a film that tells the oppression of the Iraqi Kurds and the effects of the Halabja massacre through the story of a little girl. He is another director who made films in the diaspora and is among the directors who contributed to Kurdish cinema with his cinematic works.

Hisham Zaman is a Kurdish director born in Iraq and graduated from a Norwegian film school. His film Before Snowfall (2013) is his first feature film and about focusing on a little boy's journey to find her sister after she ran away from an arranged marriage; the film is about a road movie and a story of finding himself. And Letter to the King (2014) is his second feature film, focusing on the story of a group of Kurdish refugees and the letter they wrote to the king in order not to return to their country. Karzan Kader, one of the Diaspora Kurds, settled in Sweden with her family after fleeing the Iraq war and

studied cinema in Stockholm. His first feature film Bekas (2012), deals with the dream of two homeless brothers to reach Superman by going to America (Sert, 2019, p. 56-58).

The oppressive order in Syria has also led to the emergence of filmmakers and the prevention of cinematic activities in the country. In such an order, the emergence of Kurdish directors prevented the creation of the cinema of the Kurds, who are already struggling with their identity and existence. The only known Syrian Kurd, Mano Xalil, is one of the directors living in the diaspora (Kılıç, 2009, p.10).

The Kurdish cinema concept brings more profound and more complex problems with the presence of Diaspora directors. General framework about what Kurdish cinema is; The fact that Kurds and Kurdish characters are at the center of the narrative and that Kurdish directors related to common political, social, and social themes are a cinema that tells the experiences of a nation. Although people living in other countries are affected by the cinematic formation here, and the conditions for cinematic production and distribution take place in these countries, the subject, representation, and aesthetic form of their films mainly constitute ethnic identity problems in their homeland and political and social issues.

3.3.3. Kurdish Cinema in Iran

In Iran, another geography where Kurds live, the existence problem of Kurdish cinema arises similarly to the issues of Kurdish filmmakers residing in other countries. Abbas Kiarostami's The Wind Will Take Us (1999), Samira Makmalbaf's Blackboard (2000), and Abolfazl Jalili's Dance of Dust (1998) demonstrate Kurdish characters and Kurdish stories on the screen. These films are films shot after the decision of the Iranian government. The international success of these films and the awards they won impacted the Kurds' hearing and the Kurdish language (Kılıç, 2009, p. 9).

With these developments in Iran, the possibility of Kurdish director Bahman Ghobadi to create Kurdish cinema began. His films about Kurds have had a significant impact on Kurdish cinema. With these developments in Iran, the possibility of Kurdish director Bahman Ghobadi to create Kurdish cinema began. His films about Kurds have had a significant impact on Kurdish cinema. International awards won by his films have led to Kurdish cinema being heard, recognized, and developed.

Another Iranian Kurdish director and a significant name in Kurdish cinema are Jamil Rostami. His first feature film shot in Kurdish was screened in Asia, and the Middle East at the Fajr Film Festival, with his film Requiem of Snow (2005) was chosen as the best director (Kılıç, 2009, p. 10).

Bahman Ghobadi's films point to the Kurds as a different nation with their culture and identity. These films, which depict the Kurds as a separate nation, are also described as a resistance against the Kurds' freedom, language, identity, and culture (Kılıç, 2009, p. 170). Ghobadi makes the lives of the Kurdish people the center of his films. The awards received by the films at international film festivals have increased the international recognition of Kurdish identity and, thus, the presence of Kurdish cinema. Ghobadi appears as the most crucial figure in the development of Kurdish cinema.

Ghobadi's films that tell social problems through the concepts of identity and border are essential. The director's first feature film, Time for Drunken Horses (2000), shot in Kurdish, focuses on the border trade of a Kurdish family living in an Iraqi-Iranian border village. The story of the children left behind after their father died by stepping on a mine due to smuggling and their complex life struggles is told. The director deals with the border phenomenon and the Kurdish identity in the film Niwemang/Half Moon (2006). It focuses on the story of an elderly Kurdish musician who crosses the border to give a concert. And also one of his films is Lakposhtha Parvaz Mikonand /Turtles Can Fly (2004).

3.3.4. Kurdish Cinema in Iraq

The Kurdish film industry in Iraq under the Saddam regime and political pressures delayed the establishment of the Kurdish cinema industry in this country. However, in the environment of political, cultural, and economic liberation brought about by the formation of a new administrative structure in the Kurdish geography in the north of Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War, it is seen that Kurdish directors have increased the possibilities of film production, and cinemas and television programs in the Kurdish language have begun to be made (Rosebiani, 2009, p. 81-82).

Several activities influenced the formation and development of Kurdish cinema in Iraq. Foremost among these was the construction of the Kurdistan Regional Government,

and together with it, cinema departments were established to support young filmmakers. The development of Kurdish cinema financially supported filmmakers. Kurdish directors such as Jano Rosebiani, Jalal Jonroy, and Hiner Saleem, who had previously left their country and lived in the diaspora, returned to Iraq and continued their cinematic production activities there. In addition, young directors were supported in this cinema department, and this cinema unit tried to develop this cinema with various short film festivals (Kılıç, 2009, p. 8).

These changing political conditions in Iraq allowed the emergence of Kurdish cinema and the making of Kurdish films. Some of those are Shawkat Amin Korki, whose films are successful at international festivals, and Mehdi Umed, who made one of the first Kurdish films (Aktaş, 2009, p.62-63).

CHAPTER 4

REVIEW OF SAMPLE FILMS

4.1. Marooned in Iraq (2002)

4.1.1. Content

Mirza, a famous Iranian Kurd musician, one day receives the news of his wife Hanareh's call for help, who left him 23 years ago after the women in Iran were forbidden to sing in public. Mirza's son, Barat, is single and wants to get married, while his other son, Audeh, is married to seven women and has eleven daughters. Audeh, who wants a son, searches for a woman who can match him and have a son during this journey. Although Mirza's sons do not want to go on this journey, at their father's insistence, they set out for Iraq to help Hanareh: Mirza, and his sons, who come across various tragic-comic events and stories along the way. Barat falls in love with the voice of a singing woman and wants to marry her, but says that if the woman can sing freely, he can marry her. On the other hand, Barat states that women are forbidden to sing and that he can sing only to himself. The image of refugee camps, evacuated villages, and mass graves deeply shakes Mirza and his sons in the film, which reveals the massacres committed by the Saddam regime with the chemical bomb attack as they approached Iraq. In the refugee camp, Audeh asks Rojan, the woman in charge there, if she can marry him, but Rojan gets angry with Audeh and says why don't you adopt them when there are so many hopeless children, and Audeh adopts two boys from this camp. In the continuation of the road, Mirza leaves with his sons and tries to find Hanareh alone. Hanareh, whose sight and voice are damaged by the chemical bomb, hides. Hanareh, through an intermediary, gives her young daughter Sinour to Mirza to be possessed. Mirza takes Hanereh's daughter, crosses the barbed wire border, and returns to where he came from.

4.1.2. Context

As a Kurdish director living in Iran, Ghobadi is a director who tells about the Kurds, focuses on the lives of Kurds, and makes films in the Kurdish language. As Şengül states that “The debates on the existence of a 'Kurdish cinema' started in the late 1990s, especially after the international release of Bahman Ghobadi's award-winning Zaman Barayé Masti Asbha / A Time for Drunken Horses (2000)” (2012, p. 153). This international award undoubtedly contributed to the awareness of Kurdish cinema and the visibility of the Kurdish ontological ethos. The importance and publicity of Ghobadi's films stimulated a cinema culture based on Kurdish identity politics (Koçer, 2016, p.172). Bahman Ghobadi's latest film, 'Kasi Az Gorbehaye Irani Khabar Nadareh' (Nobody Knows About Persian Cats 2009), is about young people illegally playing Western rock music, rap, and metal in Tehran. Ghobadi was banned and censored on accusations of being a 'separatist Kurd' for making the film without permission in Iran (Aktaş, 2009, p. 2004).

Although the film is a heavy criticism of Saddam's regime, it also implicitly criticizes the bans and laws in Iran. In particular, he points out the Kurds as a different nation, speaking their language, distinct from Iran with their traditions and cultures, and as a displaced nation. Accented cinema as an engaged cinema is concerned with specific individuals, ethnicities, nationalities, identities, and the experience of deterritorialization itself (Naficy, 2001, p. 31). Although Ghobadi made the films in Iran, where he lives, his films are similar to the accented film features, as they focus on the Kurdish conditions and the experience of deterritorialization. Although Ghobadi made the films in Iran, where he lives, his films are similar to the accented film features, as they focus on the Kurdish conditions and the experience of deterritorialization. According to Naficy, postcolonial ethnic and identity cinema by the exigencies of life here and now in the country where the filmmakers reside (Naficy, 2001, p. 15). Focusing on his own experiences and the cinematic representation of the hardships of the Kurdish nation, Bahman Ghobadi stated that his films are to draw a picture of what happened in the past and future of the Kurdish people. (Hamid, 2009, p. 191).

The phenomenon of border and journey, one of the accented film phenomena, emerges in the film's narrative structure. The scenes of the people trapped between the two boundaries of the Kurds, who fled due to Saddam's regime in Iraq but could not go to Iran, are built in the middle of the film. In addition, the journey, another notion of the accented cinema, forms the thematic pattern of the film.

Although the importance of Ghobadi films is the panorama of actual experiences of the suffering, traumas, and massacres of the Kurds, this situation of the Kurdish people still preserves its currency. The importance of his films primarily marks the Kurds as a separate nation by treating the Kurds' lives, feelings, and ways of thinking in a neo-realist documentary style. These are the real experiences of the Kurds, whose borders as a nation are divided and limited by sovereign states.

The social and cultural narratives created by Ghobadi in his films offer a spatial reading created by the current Kurdish existence and the problems related to Kurdishness. This cinematic language he made appears in the spatial narrative strategy, such as border, camp, mountain, and road, which are metaphorical expressions of Kurdishness and the complex struggles of being a Kurd.

4.1.3 Representation

One of the mandatory fields for Kurdish cinema is primarily what the film corresponds to thematically, symbolically, politically, and culturally. Kurdish filmmaking creates a discursive space where they can envision national existence. (Koçer, p. 170). Kurdish women, whose voices have not been heard until now and whose identity and existence have been ignored, are built at the story's center with their traditional images, different from Iranian women, and with their presence in relatively free areas, speaking Kurdish. According to Naficy, although accented filmmakers influence film distribution processes by writing their films in their language, language is vital in shaping individual identities and national and regional languages (Naficy, 2001, p. 24). The fact that Kurdish is spoken in independent Kurdish cinema and that Kurdish women are represented in their language this positioning in the film symbolizes a national existence in which being Kurdish is indicated as an identity statement by using the language of women's representation. Again, in a comparative context, according to

Özdil, the fact that Kurdish is spoken in the cinema and that movies are made in Kurdish indicates an existence whose language, geographies, tradition, history, present, and future are denied, and therefore its presence is ignored. (p. 322).

The fact that women speak their language is a statement of existence historically and is ignored by the hegemonic world. Kilic says cinema faces the problem of emancipation and imposing its identity. It offers the Kurds, facing each other, the opportunity to reproduce their identities with their own culture and carry them to the world scale (2009, p. 15). Kurdish women in the film speak Kurdish, when considered in terms of Kurdishness and the spiral of existence, assumes a symbolic and powerful meaning and an essential role for this nation, whose language and existence are perceived as a threat by the sovereign states. Speaking Kurdish, which has become the iconic representation of the film, constitutes the nature and essence of a nation or social group. Cultural areas also increase the resistance to the Kurdish language, and this power of language also increases Kurdish political and cultural progress against state oppression (Koçer, 2014, p. 483). This film, which will be shown among the somewhat oppositional position of Kurdish cinema in the canonization process, first of all, creates a national consciousness for the Kurds and presents an area of cultural resistance by announcing its existence

In Marooned in Iraq, the story revolves around a woman forbidden to sing freely. Music and songs play an essential role as markers of individual and collective identities, just like in accented films (Naficy, 2001, p. 24-25). Hanareh denotes the film's dominant political and ideological positioning by transforming from her homeland, where she fled to sing freely in her native language, to a symbol of cultural and identity resistance and resistance to the sovereign state. Against the oppressive and assimilating situation, it brings a new reality towards Kurdishness and women that will transform their political and social existence. For directors, who are also interested in the way cultural production increases this possibility, cinema has provided the opportunity to emancipate and reproduce their identities with their own culture and carry them to the world scale (Kılıç, 2009, p. 15).

According to Naficy, studying a transnational cultural phenomenon such as cinema does not always leave behind the originality of local cultures (2001, p. 6). In the

face of hegemonic cinematic narratives that construct women's identities and Kurdish existence as absence, Kurdish cinema and its directors, above all, need to build a cinematic tool that will produce the Kurdish people whose existence is stigmatized as an absence. Representations that will create a new type of subject for Kurdish cinema also create space for Kurdish female issues. Hall says that this fixed and unchanging narrative of the concept of cultural identity consists of narratives that highlight the assumption of a kind of collective “one people" based on shared historical narratives and cultural codes and that it constitutes the essence of cinemas by creating a solid argument, especially in the post-colonial struggle of marginalized peoples (1989, p.69). In Marooned in Iraq, cultural representations such as Hanareh's transformation into a reality full of prohibitions imposed on women to sing, leaving her homeland to sing in her language, and the appearance of Kurdish women in traditional clothes these cultural representation strategies of Kurdish film are closely related to the spiral of the construction of Kurdishness and the visibility of Kurdish identity. As Özdil emphasizes, Kurdish cinema was born from a struggle for identity and recognition. Kurdish cinema emerged as a result and part of relations of sovereignty and subordination, which radically transformed the political, cultural, and geographical space and produced a new kind of subjectivity (2009, 325).

Mohanty emphasizes that women are shaped relationally based on context, such as ethnicity, class, and race, which historically indicate their specific structures, not because they are women based on biological principles (2006, p. 400). It is a vital concern in analyzing these Kurdish films that contexts based on ethnic identity, race, and class shape women's identities. The identity journey of Kurdish women, to whom the Saddam regime bombed and deterritorialized Kurdish geography, emerges when their ethnic/national identity begins at the borders, turning them into a metaphor for a painful past and present because of their Kurdish identity. As Hall mentions, “identity as constituted, not outside but within representation; and hence of cinema, not as a second-order mirror held up to reflect what already exists, but as that form of representation which can constitute us new kinds of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover who we are” (1989, p. 80). In this respect, the representation that identifies the Kurdish identity, the struggle for national existence, as a new subject different from the

colonial discourse leads to a search for a practice of discovery to construct a positioning about what and who the Kurdish identity is.

According to Naficy, the space created by exile in cinema is gendered. The nature and landscape of the motherland are represented as feminine and motherly (2001, p. 154). The metaphor motherland, which forms the thematic pattern of the film, is especially emphasized by the character of Hanareh. Hanareh's insensitivity turned into one of the Kurdish cinematic symbols. The strong woman who struggled to sing and had to flee was silenced by the chemical bombs of the Saddam regime, and her body was damaged. Kurdish women have been injured because of the attacks they have suffered due to asymmetric power relations, and their existence has turned into a living ethnography. The film's narrative style, which is fictionalized with the female body, intersects with Kurdishness and some paths related to the fate of the Kurds. Kılıç says, “In Ghobadi movies, the fate of Kurdish women is the same as the fate of their homeland” (2009, p. 167).

According to Mulvey, one of the scenes points to the man's fantasies and obsessions, where the woman is attached to her place (p. 14-15). in the scene where Audeh, who is married to 7 women, does not want to go out with her father, she does not trust the man who passes by her wife and does not want to set out. The existence of gender concepts in the film's narrative suggests that Ghobadi constructs male and female representations according to gender norms. The universe of cinema, besides giving filmmakers the opportunity of original and personal expression, the world of thought of the filmmakers, who are members of society and produced by the community, is not independent of the environment that produces it. It is formed around the discourses of cultural identities constructed as social reality in the cinematic narrative. In this context, Keyman proposes that the phenomenon of cultural identity as a social reality and recognition policy should be made around a differentiated and multidimensional identity debate and within its different contexts in understanding, discussion, and solution-seeking (2007, p. 223). As a result, Ghobadi, a Kurdish director living in Iran, shows that his films, fed by being caught between two cultures, can be read as projections of this.

4.1.4 Character

According to Hall, although identities have an essence that they continue to correspond to, identities are constructed in the process of becoming by using the resources of history, culture, and language (Hall, p. 3-4). Hanareh's identity journey is built in the process of becoming by referring to this history and roots. Despite the problematic condition of surviving as a woman, Hanareh makes her resistance visible with her voice and identity. Since the Kurds' languages, voices, and identities are marginal areas occupied, Hanareh defines and emphasizes the boundaries of these occupied areas. She participates in the construction of identity by taking a step into the identity formation process, with phenomena such as escaping for action, struggling with difficulties, and struggling with her identity as a Kurdish woman. We can say that Hanareh has lived through the experience of displacement, the struggle for identity, a common fate similar to the life of the Kurdish people, their past, and their struggle. According to Naficy, each story transforms into accented cinematic allegories in accented cinema, both as the individual's personal story and as social stories added to the narratives of exile and the diaspora (2001, p. 31). The displacement and homelessness phenomenon experienced by Hanareh was depicted as similar to the fate of Kurdish women and Kurds. It emerged as a representation of the common issues of the Kurds. Özdil says “Kurd,” which is revealed in the cinema, it turns into a symbolic/intense character representing Kurdishness rather than just being a Kurd. In other words, it always represents itself through the whole of which it is a part” (2009, p. 219). The state of deterritorialization that Hanareh lived being separated from her homeland, a life full of prohibitions, appears as the expression of the similar common past of Kurdish women—moreover, even the separation from their homeland, the deterritorialization of a people. The manifestation of deterritorialization is in question in different forms in every Kurdish film.

4.2. My Sweet Pepper Land (2013)

4.2.1. Content

After the fall of Saddam's regime, the Iraqi Kurds gained their freedom and engaged in a series of activities to serve the newly established order. One of them is Baran, appointed as the commander of the village of Qamarian, located on the border of Turkey and Iran. Baran must explain that a new order and law have been established in this village. With Govend appointing a teacher to this village, troubles come to them. Govend is engaged to a man she doesn't want because of her father's compulsion. In addition, the Kurdish social and patriarchal degeneration will be defeated by judgment. Aziz, the village's political, economic, and cultural manager in the film, represents the corrupt patriarchal order. Aziz, who conflicts with Govend and Baran, also has problems with the female militant group. With Govend's solidarity with the Kurdish women's militant group, they ended the order Aziz had established.

4.2.2 Context

The Kurdish film industry in Iraq under the Saddam regime and political pressures delayed the establishment of the Kurdish cinema industry in this country. However, in the environment of political, cultural, and economic liberation brought about by the formation of a new administrative structure in the Kurdish geography in the north of Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War, it is seen that Kurdish directors have increased the possibilities of film production, and cinemas and television programs in the Kurdish language have begun to be made (Rosebiani, 2009, p. 81-82).

Hiner Saleem, one of the Iraqi Kurds, had to flee to Italy with his family at the age of 17 due to Saddam's regime. The director, who received his cinematic education in Italy, later went to France and started his cinematic production here. Returning to Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991 to capture the life and problem of the Kurds on camera, Saleem shoots the movie Un bout de Frontiere (One End of the Border) with his 16 mm camera.

However, he could not finish his film due to the conflicts in the region and returned to Italy. Later, with the help of Gillo Pontecor, the film was completed and screened at the Venice film festival. This film launched Saleem's film career and enabled him to find funding for his later films (Özdil, 2009, p. 225-226).

Although the cinema aesthetics and production practice of the director living in the diaspora have developed here, the subject of his films is surrounded by some of the aspects of the Kurdish problem, the war and its effects, the struggle for identity, the Kurds who want to escape to Europe or have fled. Therefore, facts such as the war situation the Kurds are in and the chaotic order created by the war have affected Saleem's cinematic understanding, aesthetics, form, and representation strategy. Saleem's films adopt a different narrative style than traditional Kurdish films, and despite the existence of other characters and identities, as a diaspora director, 'ethnic identity and nostalgia for the homeland' constitute the central theme of his films (Özdil, p. 227).

Saleem's Vodka Lemon (2003) movie focuses on the story of a Kurdish Yezidi man living in a village in Armenia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and tells the problematic conditions of the Kurds. While immigration, border, and socio-economic problems are at the forefront, the Kurdish films' themes are the road, snow, and statelessness. Hiner Saleem returned to Kurdish geography and shot the film Kilometre Zero in 2005. While the Kurdistan Regional Government financed this film, it was included in the competition section of the Cannes Film Festival as a film from Kurdistan in 2005 (Kılıç, 2009, p. 8).

4.2.3 Representation

The story of the Kurdish Govend is at the center of a representation where cultural, political, and social criticism is also visible in a cinematic form in which ethnic and social distinctions are articulated and structured. Govend makes visible the symbolic violence of the patriarchal order on female subjects by experiencing that the village he went to as a teacher is structured with the power imbalance in the patriarchal structure, in the micro areas where this goes. In Özdil's words, "Saleem's characters evoke the impression of people who enjoy being there and resist, not heroes who are thrown into the 'wild Kurdish geography,' struggling with nature and socio-political and economic difficulties at the same time, looking for an inside for themselves" (2009, p. 231). The character of Govend is located in a place that criticizes and resists the asymmetrical power relationship between women and the patriarchal order created by being in this place. The film, in which the masculine ideology is positioned, presents a transformational critique of how the patriarchal society can create a hierarchy, not only by the existence of an empirical and discursive category but by putting the Kurdish patriarchal social structure at the center of the film.

Third World women are the common context of the political struggle against ethnic, racial, gender, and imperialist hierarchies that can be formed as a strategic group at the historical crossroads (Mohanty, 2006, p. 402). The women's militant group, which creates a space where the Kurdish war and the Kurdish issue are visible, opens another curtain on the representations of women's groups in Kurdish cinema. The female militant group takes center stage in the film narrative and becomes an active and transformational surface in conflict, resistance, and struggle. Smets&Hamid says, "the construction of a continuous identity of Kurdishness." Moreover, goddesses and heroines are evoked to emphasize women's important place in the Kurdish national movement" (2014, p. 202). The fact that female characters are active subjects in the political campaign, Govend's resistance to corruption in the patriarchal structure.

Constructing a narrative criticizing feudalism and corruption, the director severely criticizes Kurdish society's patriarchal structure and feudal corruption. Govend, in

solidarity with the female militant group, will overthrow Aziz and, thus, the corrupt patriarchy. Afterward, Govend, who got engaged to the man he did not want with his father's force, will take his freedom and say that he does not wish to his fiancee. According to Mulvey, alternative cinema emphasizes the formal preoccupation with how the society that produces it reflects psychic obsessions, and it should begin by reacting to these obsessions (1989, p.15). In the film, Saleem criticizes the patriarchal order that limits society. It emphasizes women as economically, politically, and socially liberated individuals. As Hall puts it, "identity as constituted within representation, not outside representation; and thus cinema, not as a second-order mirror held to reflect what already exists, but as a form of representation that can create new kinds of subjects for us and thus enable us to discover who we are" (1989, 1989, p. 80). Govend's production of cultural identity in the film, a representation that defines it as a new subject, different from the patriarchal social structure, leads to a search for a practice of discovery to construct a positioning of what and who the Kurdish female identity is.

4.2.4 Character

For Naficy, journeys, whether imaginary or real, are the central theme of accented cinema. Journeys are about the formation processes between identity change and transformation processes. Not all journeys are physical. There are metaphorical and philosophical journeys of identity and transformation involving the film characters or sometimes the filmmakers themselves (2001, p.33). The theme that emerged with Govend's identity journey and transformation corresponds to the inner journey in the identity journeys that Naficy talks about. Govend is presented as a result of his struggle with the patriarchal social structure in her new place where she went to teach, not adopting social norms and interfering with this order. Govend creates the identity process in the film as a character who becomes conscious and liberated in the identity transformation.

One of the movie's highlights, the tension between Iraqi Kurds and Turkey's Kurds, is one of the film's narratives. Counter-discourse practice comes into play against the circulating discourses regarding the Kurds living in different geographies than other nations. Govend makes statements that the Kurds of Iraq and Turkey are one. Various

environmental factors affect cultural formations and affect the cultures of ethnic groups. Thus, the same ethnic group living in different environmental conditions can create different behavioral patterns (Barth, 1969/2001. p.15). Although the Kurds living in different geographies have emerged under other cultural, political, and social conditions, they have a common ethnic/national identity. The articulation relationship that appears in the presentation of identities in the film is that the Kurds living in different geographies are nationally one.

The struggle and resistance that will emerge with the unity of national identity on the axis of Kurdish identity is a substantial potential. The film presents a liberation-based narrative with the merger of the Women's militant group and Govend. In Smets&Akkaya's words, "the practice of filmmaking should be based on anti-colonial liberation, a struggle that should bring forth liberated men and women" (2014, p. 2002). Govend, together with the female militant group, reinforces the political-ideological positioning of the film against the dominant social order by resisting the colonizing order.

4.3. The Storm/Bahoz (2008)

4.3.1. Context

Kazım Oz is one of the well-known Kurdish directors in Turkey as one of the Kurdish directors who studied cinema at the Mesopotamia Cultural Center in the 1990s. "His fiction short, Ax (The Land/Toprak, Kazim Öz, 1999) and the later fiction feature Fotograf (The Photograph/Fotograf, Kazim Öz, 2001) won numerous awards" (Candan, 2016, p.11). Kazım Öz, one of the directors who built a cinematic language in which Kurds were represented towards the end of the 1990s, filled the representation gap of a nation with his films pointing to the Kurdish existence. Çiftçi says that "when examining Kazım Öz's films, the first thing to focus on is the 'representation gap' that precedes these films" (2009, p.267). For this reason, in the relatively free environment of the 1990s, these representation gaps were tried to be filled by Kazım Öz. However,

the subject of the director's film, which was born within the Kurdish issue, was also shaped by these themes and formed the film's narrative (Şen, 2019, p. 340).

The 1990s is one of the critical periods of the identity crisis. The 1990s, when the identity crisis and the struggle continued intensely, also affected Kurdish cinema and created a representation gap. Some critical developments influenced the emergence of Kurdish cinema in Turkey in the 1990s. One of them is the increased influence of the Kurdish political movement in Turkey since the 90s, the easing of the pressures on the Kurdish identity, and the emergence of cultural and artistic productions of the Kurdish movement in parallel (Şen, 2019, p. 319).

The Kurds were represented in the states they lived under their domination through the cinemas of those states, and they were referred to as "doğulu"/eastern (Şengül, 2012). The Kurds were represented in the states they lived under their domination through the cinema of those states, and they were referred to as "doğulu"/eastern by being marginalized. Kurdish directors move away from stereotyped representations of women and create the Kurdish woman as the film's subject by processing their point of view. Kurdish cinema is trying to fill the representation gap and change the stereotypical representations with the efforts of Kurdish directors.

The political pressures of the nation-building processes on the Kurdish people and biopolitical practices in 1990s Turkey are also the image of Kazım Öz's cinema. Öz created his cinematic production approach, aesthetic form, representation strategy, and story with diegetic narration by addressing the situation of the war and struggle, which intensified in the 90s, with the ontological issue and the phenomenon of political consciousness.

The film is about the Kurdish issue in Turkey in the 90s. It is a film embodying the Kurdish issue and the Kurds' desire to be visible. Within the Kurdish political movement, it should be seen as a counter-expression of the Kurdish issue's desire to be heard and visible. Considering the conditions of visibility of the Kurdish issue and Kurdishness in Kurdish cinema, considering Kurdish films, primarily influenced by identity and national identity issues, as texts embodying the desire for visibility and resistance, this desire is decisive in the themes, form, and aesthetics of the film (Sen, p. 320).

According to Naficy, each story transforms into accented cinematic allegories in accented cinema, both as the individual's personal story and as social stories added to the narratives of exile and the diaspora (2001, p. 31). Oz's film can represent the political, cultural, and economic pressures that the Kurds have experienced, the joint displacement, and the oppression and ignorance of the Kurds.

4.3.2. Content

The movie Storm tells the events that happened after Cemal came to Istanbul to study after winning the university. Helin and Ali find the names of Kurdish students from the list of students who have won the university exam and write them on the blackboard in their classrooms so they can join the political movement. Although Cemal is Kurdish, he does not accept his Kurdishness and is in ideological conflict with Helin, one of the group's leaders. The tension between Helin and Cemal becomes tenser when Helin slaps Cemal, who denies his Kurdishness. Rojda, on the other hand, adapts to the group more quickly as the daughter of a Kurdish parliamentarian. After Cemal embraced his Kurdishness and actively participated in the struggle, this time, we see the alienation effect of the organization. Helin and Ali are seen as falling in love with each other, even though it is forbidden for those in the movement not to fall in love and not to drink alcohol. After the movement hears about this love, they are criticized in the group meeting. Helin gives up her passion by writing a letter of self-criticism not to be expelled from the group. Helin, Rojda, and other characters attempt to escape from Turkey in the film, which tells about the times when conflict and struggle increased in the 90s. While Rojda was successful, Helin was caught by the police.

4.3.3. Representation

After a long period of silence, Kurdish films create a film narrative that speaks Kurdish, tells about the Kurds, and builds the Kurdish characters at the center of the story, thus enabling Kurdish cinema to gain legitimacy. As Çiftçi emphasizes

(…) The analysis of Kurdish films should begin with analyzing what their very existence means before their inner meanings, discourses, and grammar. Because the inner meaning of these films, which destroy or point to a void with their presence, is the

inner meaning of the diegetic world. It must be completed with other information (2009, 269).

The diegetic world, which defines the inner meaning of the representations of women in these films, has formed a multi-layered space where ideas are structured in the film's narrative world with their suppressed existence, identities, and subjectivities within the boundaries of a protracted conflict, oppression, and struggle. The film openly acknowledges the Kurdish issue and the assimilation, struggle, and resistance it brings. Kurdish women's efforts for action and ideas point to their desire to be ontologically visible, surrounded by their identities, existence as subjects, political positions, and culture. The fact that female characters speak Kurdish and have Kurdish names indicates no representation. It can be thought of as the existing construction of a people silenced by their existence and bodies.

The multi-layered structure established in the film is embedded while creating the film characters. It has been politicized in the cinematic field with its untold representations or images far from realistic representations. In Koçer's words, "the political nature of Kurdish cultural production, transnational circumstances have, in part, generated the conditions for the politicized subscription to a Kurdish identity and the nationalization of Kurdish culture and language" (p. 171). Kurdish cinema constitutes the construction process of being Kurdish and being a Kurdish subject by Kurdish directors to declare its existence as a relatively new phenomenon and to fill the representation gap. In the movie Bahoz/the Storm, the identity process for this process of becoming and becoming is established in the movie's narrative. The construction of being Kurdish and being a woman is not a finished work of the film; it continues and expresses an incompleteness in the formation process. Helin and Rojda's awareness of Kurdishness and the ongoing formation processes by this consciousness in the film are parallel to the narrative in which the construction of Kurdishness and subjectivity are intertwined in the film's foundation.

The photograph sent by her family from her hometown is one of the main objects of remembrance that helps keep the bond with her identity to the hometown Helin left behind alive. According to Naficy, accented films also use objects such as photographs while emphasizing visual fetishes of homeland and the past, visible markers of

difference and belonging (2001, p. 24). For Helin, this photograph is the object where she maintains her individual and collective belonging and identity by remembering her past and hometown. It emerges as a symbol that maintains Helin's commitment to her roots and emphasizes her cultural belonging. Cultural markers, which are essential in Helin's transformation into a subject struggling for her identity, are also crucial in Helin's resistance and her political positioning against the dominant culture. Hall says that this fixed and unchanging narrative of the concept of cultural identity consists of narratives that highlight the assumption of a kind of collective “one people" based on shared historical narratives and cultural codes and that it constitutes the essence of cinemas by creating a solid argument, especially in the post-colonial struggle of marginalized peoples (1989, p.69). Common narratives, histories, stories, images, voices, exile, traumatic experiences, etc., such narrative codes reveal the cultural identity history of Kurdish cinema.

In addition to situations such as female characters being active subjects in the political movement and being in high positions, the Kurdish director, who constructs a narrative without falling into the trap of male and female distinctions, seriously criticizes the patriarchal structure in Kurdish society. Helin criticizes her boyfriends' view of women and accuses them of seeing women as worthless. Criticizing the power imbalance between the character of Helin and the patriarchal social structure between men and women points to an alternative view. According to Mulvey, alternative cinema emphasizes its formal preoccupation with how the society that produced it reflects the psychic obsessions and must begin by reacting to them (1989, p.15). Öz emphasizes this restrictive view of society as a criticism in his film. He criticizes the position of women in the social order and the norms of the social order organized against women, pointing to the existence of a different view.

Third-world women are the everyday context of the political struggle against ethnic, racial, gender, and imperialist hierarchies that can be formed as a strategic group at the historical crossroads (Mohanty, 2006, p. 402). The identity journeys of the characters Helin and Rojda begin where their identity is constructed with their commitment to Kurdish national ideology and Kurdish national history. Helin and Rojda appear as subjects who struggle for Kurdish identity and ideology and take action. The

female characters in the film are constructed in a field of conflict, resistance, and struggle that reveals and shapes the political power of their identities. This strength of their identities creates a historically new area of confrontation and agency. Çiçek says that Kurdish cinema invented the history, culture, and identity of the Kurdish people as well as the unrepresented history of the Turkish nation (2014, p. 83).

4.3.4. Character

In the film, the consciousness of being Kurdish, a narrative strategy that stands against the official ideologies of Kurdishness, is made visible through the film's female characters. The absence of Kurdishness in official doctrines and the rejection of Kurdish identities appear with a symbolic expression through the surface of Cemal in the story. Upon Cemal's denial of his Kurdishness, he presents a critical area through his mother's ethnicity and Kurdish name. Davis & Anthias says that women are functionally used in reconstructing ethnic/national categories and their transformation in production as markers of ethnic/national differences and as transmitters of culture (1989, p. 7). In other words, forming personal identity and the construction of perceptions of individuals about themselves is possible through communication within the group. Naturally, this identity is 'socio-genetic.' Individuals are needed for the formation of a common identity. Therefore, collective identity is the product of individual consciousness (Assman, 2001, p. 140). Cemal's Kurdish identity was determined in the film based on his mother's ethnic/national affiliation. According to Hall, identity as a process of formation is constructed with its ambivalent structure between the situation of identification, which is the same as us, and the other who is different from us. With an emphasis on the other, they position themselves about what they are and aspire to be (Hall, 1989, p. 42-48). Thus, the features belonging to the other are the boundaries and differences that separate us from them, but they are also closely related to the processes we are and who we want to be.

For Naficy, journeys, whether imaginary or real, are the central theme of accented cinema. Journeys are about the formation processes between identity change and transformation processes. Not all journeys are physical. There are metaphorical and philosophical journeys of identity and transformation involving the film characters or

sometimes the filmmakers themselves (2001, p.33). Rojda and Helin's identity journeys also do not contain borders and are not physical. But they struggle with who they are and who they want to be. Ethnic/national identities, which become tense on the line of struggle with the identity discourse imposed by the official ideology, begin their identity transformation by going beyond the boundaries of official discourses. Ethnic identity is one of the essential components of who a person and society are. Ritzer states that ethnic identities give meaning to individuals about the collectivities they belong to and their existence (2010/2011, p. 458). In other words, people come together with people with similar identities to form their ethnic affiliation.

CONCLUSION

My interest in the representations of women in Kurdish cinema started when she told and represented herself in the national and international arena with the language of film against hegemonic and colonial impositions. Over time, the meanings attributed to these women and Kurdishness emerged with similar expression fields, which turned into a critical exploration of this field. My interest in representations of women in Kurdish cinema started by questioning how these women, who could not find representation in the cinematic field with their language, culture, and existence until recently, became subjects through Kurdish filmmakers and became a representation of Kurdishness. As a Kurdish woman, the importance of making Kurdish films was in line with the understanding that women's representations were strongly influenced by the fact that the importance of making Kurdish films was revealed in the language of cinema, which was strengthened by the desire for national identity. Under these conditions, the questions I asked about the representations of women in Kurdish cinema developed in a way that took into account certain female subjects created through implicit and explicit rules about how and in what way the understanding of national identity and cultural production affects the representation strategy in Kurdish films, and under what conditions it emerges. Throughout this research, through certain Kurdish films produced in different geographies, especially in the periods when the Kurdish national identity struggle was intense, the cinematic productions and discourses of Kurdish directors were used to expose the ideologies of influencing, changing, and transforming women's representations of cultural influences in this specific film universe. I dealt with the forms of representation in the cinema with the spiral of national identity and culture.

The imagination of the nation functioned to create a collective belonging by structuring homogeneous communities of modern nation-states and spreading a sense of linguistic, cultural, and political sameness. In this sense, the concept of national cinema has brought with it many discussions as a product of an understanding that reveals different ethnic origin communities of nation-states with stereotyped concepts in a specific and unique way. Globalization and technological advances, it has led to

alternative sources, publications, and cinema for minorities and oppressed communities with different ethnic origins living in nation-states. Minorities and different communities living under the rule of nation-states have revealed their visibility with the possibilities of the cinematic field. But when it comes to the Kurds, they resist assimilation policies under the sovereignty of different nation-states, are in conflict with sovereign states with areas of identity and cultural struggle, are displaced and have different experiences, and are exposed to more than four times and space imaginations, Kurdish cinema, resisting the strategies of a homogeneous community, has been busy with the cinema that speaks for a nation, narrates their lives as fiction and documentary based on real experiences with a different awareness of identity. Throughout the research, I have discussed how the heterogeneous structure of Kurdish cinema affects women's representations of identities speaking on behalf of the nation as a different nation. In other words, I problematized the aesthetics, form, and ideology of Kurdish women's representation in film and filmmakers' political and revolutionary claims in the name of Kurdishness and Kurdishization in films.

The understanding of modern times appears as an alternative source for the democratization of media tools, the appearance of minority and oppressed communities, identities that are the target of assimilation, and voices being heard and disseminated together with technological developments. In this sense, the universe of cinema is one of the powerful media tools that emerged as an alternative to the minority communities who want to make their voices heard. Kurdish cinema also appears as a field of struggle against nation-state policies, presenting traces of the forms of nationhood for the Kurds. To interpret the identity construction and cultural formation strategy, aesthetics, and politics of Kurdish women's representations, I started to research the cinematic narratives of Kurdish films, which were selected with defined borders, by considering the forms of the imagination of becoming a nation. In established cinema narratives, Kurds living in the nation-state have emerged through limited representations characterized by regional concepts. However, in Kurdish cinema, it has developed over a concept that speaks on behalf of the nation in the construction of a nation with the identities and cultures of Kurds living under the nation-state whose borders are divided and living in different geographies and speaks out against the political, cultural and

socio-economic pressures they experience. Throughout the research, I was interested in the projections of Kurdishness and Kurdish national identity in representation strategies by influencing the aesthetics, strategy, and ideologies in Kurdish cinema.

The thesis problematized the determination of women's representations in Kurdish cinema, which developed in different geographies and processes, and in this sense, how the effects of these processes were utilized in the construction of female subjects. I placed the role of identity and cultural phenomena in constructing cinematic representations at the center of the research. I tried to analyze the basic ideology of the formation and construction of female representations in Kurdish cinema. While doing this, I pointed out the centrality of Kurdishness despite the different contexts in the reproduction and structure of the identities of the Kurdish people and women living in different geographies under other political, socio-economic, and social conditions.

In the first part, I acknowledge the centrality of the Kurdish film industry in its claims to the representation of identity and culture it offers within Kurdish cinema practices. And I present a prism through which we can see the strong influence of Kurdish identity in Kurdish directors' representation of Kurdish film characters. We see that the accumulation of the struggles in the social and historical field of the Kurds, and the Kurdish cinema, which has emerged as a field of political struggle, has turned into an area of struggle that reveals phenomena such as identity and culture with a certain synchronicity. Kurdish cinema practices, which started to emerge in the 1990s, arose through the reactions of the masses who raised their voices against the identity problem caused by political, cultural, and social pressures and the problem of existing as a Kurd. For Kurdish intellectuals and filmmakers, cinema spaces have created a moment of struggle that allows for identity struggle, where these reactions emerge and where the system of cultural and historical resistance spreads in waves. It is necessary to see Kurdish cinema as an area that cannot be separated from the cultural context's identity and originality. The original narration of recent Kurdish cinematography, their cinematic understanding with a critical point of view, and their cinematic understanding of the phenomenon of identity and culture by presenting an alternative perspective against the established knowledge of film in the representation of disadvantaged groups living under the nation-state reveals their strategic position that makes Kurdishness possible.

Understanding the representations of Kurdish women and the concepts of identity and culture is vital for understanding the basic strategies of Kurdish cinema. For research, questions about the place of concepts such as culture, representation, nation, and ethnic identity in Kurdish cinema are primarily issues related to the cinematic analysis and understanding of historical, political, and cultural processes towards Kurdish cinema. In this thesis, I tried to present the centrality of the concepts of identity and culture within cinematic narrative strategies by focusing on the female representations of emerging Kurdish films living in different geographies. Accordingly, it occurs that it influenced representational ideologies in Kurdish cinema by pointing out the specificity he established between various forms of representation and narrative elements.

Considering the factors affecting Kurdish women's representations, in the first part, I tried to present the strategies of various women's representations in Kurdish films produced in different geographies through the concepts of identity and culture. I analyzed the concepts of ethnic and national identity, culture, and representation, as the construction of identity and the formation of culture shape and form women's representations at the center of the research. I placed the concept of identity at the center of understanding the basic understandings and strategies towards Kurdish cinema and the attitudes of Kurdish filmmakers toward established forms of representation. I argued that Kurdish identity is the primary target when creating Kurdish women's representations. Identity construction also focuses on the concepts of culture, ethnicity, and nation as their constituent elements.

This study will reveal the strong effects of ethnic origins, which are influential in shaping the concept of culture, in highlighting the Kurdish female identity. On the other hand, historical and political contexts and common traditions focus on their constructive function in forming identity. This thesis focuses on the fact that the Kurdish nation, which has various divisions and borders separate, carries out identity politics based on the diversity and originality of the culture with its films based on the specificity of oppression and resistance. Cinema, in which Kurds and Kurdishness are made visible, ultimately necessitates the same struggle experiences for women's representations. Therefore, this study on the analysis of Kurdish films produced in different geographies

contributes to the field of Kurdish cinema by showing how cultural specificity is and by analyzing the narrative film strategies of ethnic belonging and national consciousness that affect identity formation and the functioning of representation forms.

On the other hand, the elements that reveal the strategies of representation in Kurdish cinema offer an alternative reality by constructing new codes, images, and cultural aspects for Kurdish identity in Kurdish films by deconstructing traditional and ideological approaches to identity within historical and cultural practices about who we are. I have argued that one of the main themes of Kurdish cinema is to say that Kurdish films are produced with new forms and discourses about what Kurdish identity and female identity are in Kurdish cinema, alongside traditional forms of representation. The primary motivation for creating Kurdish women's representations is the existence of Kurdish identity and culture and a new form of representation that constitutes the main arguments of Kurdish films. In constructing Kurdish women's representation, I suggested that Kurdish women's representation can be considered in the context of ethnic belonging based on the relationship between identity and culture. On the other hand, the existence of diversity in Kurdish women's representations focused on the emergence of Kurds living in different geographies in different historical, political, and social processes. It affected the identities of the Kurds through these processes.

The focus of the second part is the definition of Kurdish cinema and the formation and history of Kurdish cinema. The reason for this focus is understanding the definition and history of Kurdish cinema, as well as understanding the factors in its development means recognizing the film production style, aesthetics, and representation. I discover how the cultural, historical, and political processes of Kurdish directors who have contributed to the field of Kurdish cinema that has emerged in different geographies that have developed recently create the forms of representation through cinematic production and how Kurdish cinema develops. Questioning the life practices of these filmmakers, the time they spent with historical, political, and cultural struggles, their lives within divided borders, and their exposure to wars and migrations are necessary to reveal the situations that affect the formation and development of Kurdish cinema. Being a Kurd in different geographies, living as a Kurd, and having past traumatic experiences

indicated that it affected the Kurdish cinema language, discourses, identity politics, and forms of representation.

One of the most discussed issues in Kurdish cinema is the definition of Kurdish cinema. To understand Kurdish cinema, before the formation and development conditions, what this cinema is and what descriptions it contains emerges as a factual reality. The reality in Kurdish cinema is to fill a representation gap of the Kurds, who were previously represented in established cinema narratives, this time with their own words, culture, and national identities. I argue that the realistic tendency and the representational gap in these particular Kurdish film practices are the carriers of Kurdishness, Kurdish identity, and Kurdish culture, influencing the representation strategies, aesthetics, and themes of the Kurdish national entity and its connection with cinematic narratives. Therefore, taking into account the aesthetic regime of Kurdish identity and culture in Kurdish settlements and Kurdish films in exile, I conclude that the claims of Kurdishness by representations are the claims of Kurdish films. Based on the traumas and identity struggles in Kurdish life, Kurdish films invite to be added to the establishment of a new community as a new community, with a production practice that does not rely on either technologically advanced cinema or popular narratives. I conclude that the understanding of Kurdish cinema is dependent on a narrative regime that does not transcend and embrace Kurdishness. Such a cinema depends on adopting the Kurdish identity through representations to make itself heard in the international arena and realize itself through individual participation in a common world due to the necessity of an anti-hegemonic stance against the narratives of modern nation-states.

I argue that understanding the definition and history of Kurdish cinema and the effects of factors in the development of Kurdish cinema means recognizing the film mode of production, aesthetics, and representation. The impacts of socio-political, cultural, and historical conditions of art production in areas where Kurdish cinema was born and developed determine the boundaries of representation regimes. In this way, it becomes the primary area of Kurdishness and Kurdish national identity influencing the regime of representation in Kurdish cinema. In the first part of the study, I turn to the representation of alternative reality by evaluating the representation forms of Kurdish cinema and how the identity and cultural formation affect the existence of Kurdish

women. In the second part, I focus on the definition of Kurdish cinema, its formation and development history, political and cultural influences on Kurdishness, Kurdish identity, and the process of becoming a nation. I argue that this emerged with cinematic production shaped in the name of an alternative identity and culture by filling the gap between a new us and the existing representation of the Kurdish people living under the nation-state. According to this, the discovery of Kurdish women in the regime of national identity and representation and the content and aesthetic form of the Kurdish cinematic narrative became a developing feature connected with Kurdishness and the Kurdishization service.

It is very important to recognize the will to challenge the factual basis of reality in Kurdish feature films. Based on the canonical interpretation of real Kurdish experience, statelessness, and identity struggle, Kurdish cinematic narrative functions with its horizontal webs between documentary and fiction. Struggle for identity, settled through the relations of Kurdish films, requires recognizing the Kurdish cinematic aesthetics of representation, the field of cultural resistance, within these limits. However, the aesthetic regime of Kurdishness defines the limits of film production and screening practices of being a new us, a Kurdish as a different nation. Kurdish filmmakers living in the nation-state or living in the diaspora are pushing the boundaries of Kurdish representation and aesthetics from below as the production of efforts to recognize and declare Kurdishness with non-commercial film screening practices within the limits determined by the culture of hegemony. The existence of female representations that resist and struggle for their identity in Kurdish lives in different geographies is also the declaration of a representative Kurdish regime. In this way, Kurdish cinema, as a line of resistance against the identity and Kurdishness of the deterritorialized people in their own country, turns the Kurdish audience into the primary area where the narratives of Kurdishness are decisive, through low-resolution images and film production practice, conflicting and resisting representations in the name of identity. In the first part, I explain the concepts of identity, nation, and culture, defining the boundaries of the promise of a representative regime. In the second part, I make a historical evaluation of the claim of Kurdish national cinema and define the means of the birth, development, and transformation of the field of Kurdish cinema in the name of the process of making Kurdish and subordinating it to

Kurdishness. In the third part, I describe the tools that transform Kurdishness in the name of the process of subordination through women's representations of the Kurdish identity struggle and cultural existence. I argue that the Kurdish cinematic narrative, which emerged as the transmitter of the identity and culture shaped in the name of the hegemonic struggle against the hegemonic modern nations, is integrated into parallel with the forms of representation. Accordingly, the rediscovery of Kurdish women through gender policies, which prioritizes resistance to the claim of being a Kurd and with the awareness of being a Kurd, has become the main feature of the representational regime in Kurdish cinema.

In the last part of the thesis, to evaluate how the representation of Kurdish women is constructed in Kurdish films produced after 2000, the films are examined by implementing the accented cinema and feminist theory method, depending on the film analysis method, through some concepts such as identity, context, content, and representation. In this context, I noticed that the films that make up the research universe show different women's experiences in form and content and the socio-political, cultural, and historical experiences of Kurdish women in the cinematic field. In addition, Kurdish films produced in different geographies were chosen as examples to understand the dialectic in constructing Kurdish women's identities. These films were selected considering how the cinematic production activities of Kurdish directors living in different geographies affect the construction of women's representations, what women's identity and production practices are, how they shape the language of cinema, and how they create a representation strategy for cultural production.

Acknowledging the centrality of the conflict and visibility of identity struggle in Kazım Oz's cinema among Kurdish cinema practices in Turkey, I present the Kurdish identity in his films as a Kurdish director, as a prism through which we can see the struggle and the forms of representation through the spiral of Kurdishness. Kurdish cinematography presents a horizontal network understanding that tries to bridge the gap between fiction and documentary in the name of Kurdishness with a unique narrative. In Kazım Oz's cinema, the political struggles of the 90s and their assimilation policies towards the Kurdish identity show Kurdishness, the strategic positions that display the difficulties faced by the Kurdish identity and make Kurdishization possible. In Bahman

Ghobadi's film, the desire to transcend borders is centered on narratives that create a new state of subjectivation with their identity struggles and journeys, preoccupied with the lives of Kurds in Iran at the borders. Saleem's cinematography focuses on real situations, focusing on the internal conflicts of the Kurdish communities that declared their independence after the war, and the search for a new identity. In this sense, female representations in Kurdish cinematography proclaim the medium of the film as the bearer of the truth about Kurdish identity and Kurdishness. At the same time, the life experiences of Kurdish filmmakers and the political atmosphere of the period transform into a realistic aesthetic, forming horizontal networks of fictional-documentary borders. Kurdish cinematography is a field that can be thought of as an area of action that prioritizes Kurdish identity, which oscillates between assimilation and resistance with the awareness of being Kurdish. Kurdish feature films characterize resistance and identity struggle, albeit independent in terms of time and place, which both convey the traumatic pasts of differentiated Kurdish lives, and their political struggles, with multilingual perspectives on their dispersed national unity and identities and as a medium in which real experiences are shaped by fiction. It determines the representation strategy by considering a struggling environment in which

Kurdish films emerge in cinematic production with a narrative strategy that is different from the established understanding of film, emphasizing the nation's social, political, and cultural history, which has not been represented before, and which marks a void with its existence. Focusing on social, political, and personal stories, Kurdish directors direct their cameras to existing situations and events. Thus, they create a film representation by telling the construction of Kurdishness and Kurdish national identity through their own stories. The final chapter analyzes how Kurdish national identity influences Kurdish women's representations and characters. Kurdish producers living in different geographies expressed their active participation in the Kurdish national identity and cultural formation process through films. To examine how the representation system and strategy are structured in the films of these filmmakers, it is necessary to explore the interaction of these films with Kurdish women's identities. I analyzed Kurdish films' central concepts, themes, and discourses for this research to shape Kurdish women's representations. This section aimed to examine the extent of the impact of the Kurdish

construction and cultural formation practice, which triggered Kurdish films, on the representations of national identity, which is at the center of the discussion of women's representations, with the film analysis method.

Considering the accented cinema theory proposed by Hamid Naficy to examine Third-world cinema, I explored and interpreted how women's representations were affected and structured through the concepts of identity, culture, and national identity in Kurdish films. It started with how women's representations were involved in cinematic production, which Kurdish films started on Kurdish identity and culture. In this way, I concluded that Kurdish films try to fill the existing gap by pointing out the identified gaps that Kurds are exposed to historically, politically, and culturally, creating a factual situation as a condition of Kurdish cinematic existence. Thus, I argue that Kurds, who are experiencing an intense identity struggle under the nation-state, use the awareness of national belonging to the concept of identity in their filmmaking adventures and representation strategies to create new discourses on identity recognition and identity. Parallel to this, Kurdish women's representations are the bearers of meaning in constructing Kurdish identity and forming culture.

One of my suggestions is in the example of Kurdish films in different geographies. These factors affect women's representations; we can talk about the interactions between the historical, political, and cultural situations in which the Kurds live and that the factors affecting women's representations originate from the politics of Kurdish national identity and affect the theme, content, aesthetics, and characters of Kurdish cinema. The primary purpose of the films is to reveal the Kurdish identity issue through cinematic production practices through Kurdish representations as a result of long and intense struggles. Kurdish films have deployed the Kurdish national identity against the unrealistic Kurdish representations produced by the established understanding of cinema and have become one of the most important means of making the Kurdish perspective on national identity, history, and culture visible.

In my discussions on the centrality of the identity and cultural concepts of women's representations in Kurdish films, Kurdish films have played an important role as an open statement of Kurdish identity and culture. Kurdish cinema plays an essential role in making the Kurds visible, speaking in Kurdish, as an alternative to the Kurdish

characters whose existence has not been seen in established cinema practices or who have taken part in implicit and implicit representation strategies. The perspectives of male Kurdish directors on the identity construction and cultural formation in Kurdish women's representation and the film production strategy of Kurdish cinema are shaped in the name of the hegemonic struggle against modern nation-states and then emerge and develop by determining the boundaries of the representation regime for a national cinema. This point made me examine the contexts between Kurdish women's representations and feminist theory. Focusing on film analysis between the exploration of Kurdish women's representations, national identity, the presence of activated female characters, and gender politics, I argued that Kurdishness in Kurdish cinema had become the central feature influencing female representations of Kurdish national identity.

In the narratives of Kurdish films during periods of intense national struggle and identity resistance, representations of women emerge as subjects of a cinematic strategy formed between a gendered past and present. In modern nation-states, the other, miserable, underdeveloped, ignorant, etc. Kurdish women, who have been traumatized by a political and social transformation, are positioned between the representations of the past, resistance, the motherland, and the stabilizing icons of the nation in Kurdish cinematic narratives that emerged with the effects of political and social transformations. In the Kurdish cinematic narrative, representations of women appear as a vital issue in which the Kurds confront their past and present, with their active subject positions in the struggle for politicization and visibility as a nation. The longing for the homeland, which is the factual reality of Kurdish cinema, appears as the subject articulated with the female body and existence, the most concrete form of the ties to the homeland. Accordingly, the aesthetic regime of the representation of Kurdish women, the longing for the Kurdish homeland, was formed to present the Kurdish reality in the narrative of the film, within the forms of reception as an identifiable entity and surrounded by the roots of the Kurdish national identity struggle.

While examining the representations of Kurdish women, I first argued about the meaning of Kurdish films, what they use historically, culturally, and politically, and the primary feature of being Kurdish and Kurdish in films. Adhering to the theories conceptualized by feminist researchers such as Laura Mulvey and Chandra Mohanty for

this research, I argued that the film's meaning is essential in the analysis of films. Although the film narrative contains many substances, some crucial historical, cultural, and political situations emerge. Since Kurdish films are deployed against the modern nation-state and hegemonic struggle, the film's meaning and its forms of representation are primarily shaped around historical, socio-cultural, and politically promoted issues and forces. Accordingly, film narrative, forms of representation, and text structure can be examined according to particular historical and cultural specificities.

The Kurdish cinematic universe emerges as a discursive tool within hegemonic and capitalist film discourses, surrounded by historical and political contexts, and domesticated in favor of Kurdishness by being produced from the fields of struggle and conflict as telling the truth, speaking for a nation, representing a nation. The Kurdish film practice, which finds the opportunity to circulate in the transnational arena and at festivals, is an art regime that embraces Kurdishness as a new representation and identity. Kurdish filmmakers instrumentalized Kurdishness to structure representations of Kurdish subjects. For this reason, Kurdishness, the struggle for identity, and the engagement of Kurdish cultural discourses with cinema, Kurdish directors are deployed in an area that does not stop while they are processing the representation strategies of the nation, which is ignored with its identity, experience, and language. It activates the essentialist reconstruction of Kurdish identity through the ideological and cultural revival of Kurdish identity. However, recent examples of Kurdish cinema, where there are heterogeneous representations that save the representational forms of national identity discourses and the essentialist reconstruction of Kurdish identity, are out of the scope of this research. Analyzing the relationship between the representations of women in Kurdish cinema and the ethical transformations in the recent Kurdish cinematic understanding requires further work. The research tries to reveal the roots reflected in the representations of women in Kurdish cinema as the bearer of a horizontally defined Kurdishness and identity existing within the hegemonic discourses and political pressures of a period.

The subject, which is beyond the boundaries of this thesis but can be addressed in other studies, is how the experience of the Kurdish woman director represents women's identities. Examining them in terms of having a different point of view from Kurdish

male directors and addressing the aspects of Kurdish male directors differing from films will make a broader contribution to the field of Kurdish female representations. The imagination of Kurdishness and Kurdish identity, which affects our vision of our identity and cultural assets in the past, also determines the understanding of cinema. These factors construct and shape Kurdish representations. Is it time to put aside the imaginings of identity and Kurdish culture in Kurdish cinema that affect representations, or should the identity issue that affects representations be given up as the central theme involving Kurdish cinema practices at times when change and development are so substantial?... Kurdish cinema cannot be separated from the specificity of each national/ethnic identity and cultural context. Still, it is necessary to consider transnational cinema approaches with distinctive development and change characteristics as a part of this cinema. When we eliminate thinking in this stalemate in understanding Kurdish cinema, we can focus on alternative representations and envision different forms of representation and a unique and inclusive freedom for Kurdish women's identity.

The intense political atmosphere and identity conflicts of the 1990s in Turkey became one of the basic concepts in Kurdish cinema practice. The Kurdish traumatic life became the symbol of representation in Kurdish cinema, politicized by the identity struggle of the 1990s. At the same time, Kurds gained international recognition as a result of armed struggles in Iraq and Iran. This period's struggle for identity and identification efforts make its visibility clear by representing a univocal Kurdish sense and subject by referring to Kurdish identity in Kurdish cinema. The tension between the identity struggle and resistance in the Kurdish cinema narratives of this period appeals to Kurdish subjects as the mediator of the will of the nation, and by citing the female body and language, a formation identified with Kurdishness. The Kurdish subjectivation situation and the gender issue are central to current experience through the politicization of Kurdish women and visibility to the nation. Despite the scarcity of female directors in these periods, Kurdish male directors express their experiences of sacred motherhood, armed militancy, visibility for the nation, and women's experiences identified with the homeland, through mediators, the patriarchal foundations of Kurdish society, and Kurdishness. Technological changes, radical changes in Kurdish cinema, increase in commercial films, and quantitative increase in female directors Radical changes in

women's experiences and representations, breaking of patriarchal codes, and increasing Kurdish visibility in international arenas is an area that needs to understood more the aesthetics and forms of different women's experiences in Kurdish cinema. appears as.

Lastly, this thesis also addresses concepts such as 'film and representation,' specifically 'identity-representation' and 'identity-nation.' I tried to present a specific perspective to understand the production practices in Kurdish cinema and the interaction between representation and identity. It concerns the political, social, and cultural contexts that affect identity formation. Moreover, my project is important to initiate discussions on representations of Kurdish women in the literature. I hope it will contribute to alternative readings within and outside the field of cinematic production and to the broader discussion of national/transnational cinema in the context of constructing women's identities and cultural formation.

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